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*This Reed*

A  
CIRCUMSTANTIAL NARRATIVE  
OF  
**The Campaign in Russia,**  
EMBELLISHED WITH PLANS  
OF THE  
**BATTLES OF MOSCOW**  
AND  
**MALO-JAROSLAVITZ.**  
INTERSPERSED WITH  
FAITHFUL DESCRIPTIONS OF THOSE AFFECTING AND  
INTERESTING SCENES, OF WHICH THE AUTHOR  
WAS AN EYE-WITNESS.

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BY EUGENE LABAUME,

*Captain of the Royal Geographical Engineers, Ex-Officer of the Ordnance  
of Prince Eugene, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, and  
of the Iron Crown. Author of an Abridged  
History of the Republic of Venice.*

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

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LONDON :

PRINTED FOR SAMUEL LEIGH, IN THE STRAND,  
BY W. CLOWES, NORTHUMBERLAND-COURT.

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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THE official situation which the Author enjoyed under Prince Eugene, enabled him to give a faithful history of the most extraordinary campaign which the annals of war record. His style is simple and unaffected; and, though he aims not at any flights of eloquence, his descriptions often powerfully interest the feelings, and reach the heart. His recital of the passage of the Wop and the Beresina, yield not in genuine pathos to any real or fictitious narrative of ancient or modern times. The simplicity and candour with which he writes, are pledges of his fidelity.

The moderation and reserve with which he speaks of the unprincipled contriver of this infamous and disastrous expedition,

are worthy of notice. It is an interesting struggle between the honest indignation of the *man*, and that reverence for his general, which he had ever been taught to consider as the first duty of the *soldier*, and which, in his mind, was associated with the memory of former victories, and much personal obligation. But the English reader, who has no restraint like this on the indignant feelings of his soul, will trace the bloody career of this execrable tyrant with mingled aversion and horror. The enterprise had no colour of justice. It was prompted by the wildest lust of power, and in its execution every principle of humanity was outraged. Hurried on by the vain and puerile ambition of planting his eagles on the walls of the ancient capital of the Czars, he neglected every military precaution, he calculated not on the forces that hovered on his rear, he remembered not the rigours of a northern winter, but led to certain destruction the proudest army of which France, in her happiest days, could boast: and when he was

compelled to retrace his steps with sad discomfiture, our blood curdles at the recital of the wanton destruction which marked his retreat. While he strove, with savage fury, to wreak his revenge on the enemy, he forgot that his own soldiers would be the principal victims of the desolation which he caused. The first division was ordered to plunder and destroy without mercy, that his eyes might be gratified with the sight of human misery. He thought not, he cared not, that the divisions which followed were, by these means, exposed to the horrors of a Russian winter, without food to eat, or one habitation left entire, to afford them shelter. Thus perished five hundred thousand men the victims of inordinate ambition and savage barbarity. He has had his reward. He has been hurled from the throne which he usurped, and the disasters which our author so feelingly described, prepared the way for the deliverance of France, and the repose of Europe. If he be not dead to every sentiment of humanity, we can

scarcely wish him a greater punishment than in the solitude of Elba, to muse on this faithful and affecting narrative of the unparalleled sufferings of his devoted followers.

LONDON, November 24th, 1814.

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N. B. The French Edition of LABAUME'S NARRATIVE, is imported by Mess. BOSSANGE and MASSON, No. 14, Great Marlborough-Street, where the Public will meet with a more extensive Assortment of Foreign Publications, than at any other Establishment in the Kingdom. Their general Catalogue will be published in the course of the present month (November). It will contain not only the most esteemed Works in French Literature, but all those which have been published in France during the last Twenty Years, on the Sciences, Arts, History, &c. All new French Books arrive at this dépôt in London the same week that they are published in Paris.

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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I RELATE that which I have seen. A witness of the greatest disasters that ever befell a great nation; a spectator and an actor, in every scene of this sad and memorable expedition, I present the reader with no fictitious narrative, artfully arranged, and heightened by false colouring. The events that passed around me were daily recorded, and I now simply endeavour, to communicate the impressions which I then felt. It was by the light of the burning of Moscow, that I described the sack of that unfortunate city. It was on the borders of the Beresina, that I traced the recital of that fatal passage. The plans of the battles of the Moskwa, and Malo-Jaroslavitz, which accompany this work, were taken on the spot, at the command of Prince Eugene.

It is scarcely possible to conceive what difficulties I had to surmount in the progress of my work. Compelled, like my companions in arms, to struggle with the most urgent necessities, pierced by the cold, tormented with hunger, a prey to every accumulated horror; uncertain at the rising of the sun, whether I should see its setting rays, and doubtless at night, whether I should witness the morrow's dawn; every thought seemed concentrated in the ardent desire to live, that I might perpetuate the memory of what I had seen. Animated by this irresistible feeling, I retraced, each night, the events of the day, sitting beside a wretched fire, under a temperature of ten or twelve degrees, and surrounded by the dying and the dead. The knife with which I had carved my scanty morsel of horse-flesh, was employed in cutting a raven's quill, and a little gunpowder, mixed with some melted snow, in the hollow of my hand, served me for ink and inkstand.

I have composed this work without

personal ill-will, and without prejudice; yet I must confess, that during the recital of the most horrible enterprise, which the genius of ambition had ever conceived, I could often scarcely restrain my indignation against the author of all our misfortunes. But the respect with which his former well-earned reputation had inspired me, and the memory of the glorious victories that I had witnessed, and in the honours of which I had shared, compelled me to speak of that conqueror with moderation and reserve.

Having constantly before me the mournful image of that crowd of warriors, doomed to perish miserably in remote deserts, I was sustained by the hope of rendering my feeble homage, to a courage acknowledged even by their enemies, and to exploits the more heroic, since their object was no longer the safety of their country, nor even of their lives, but the preservation of their fame. I shall account myself most happy, if my reader is convinced, that in the midst of so many

disasters, our brave soldiers were always worthy of themselves; that they stained not their ancient renown, and that, always formidable to their enemies, they were conquered by the elements alone.

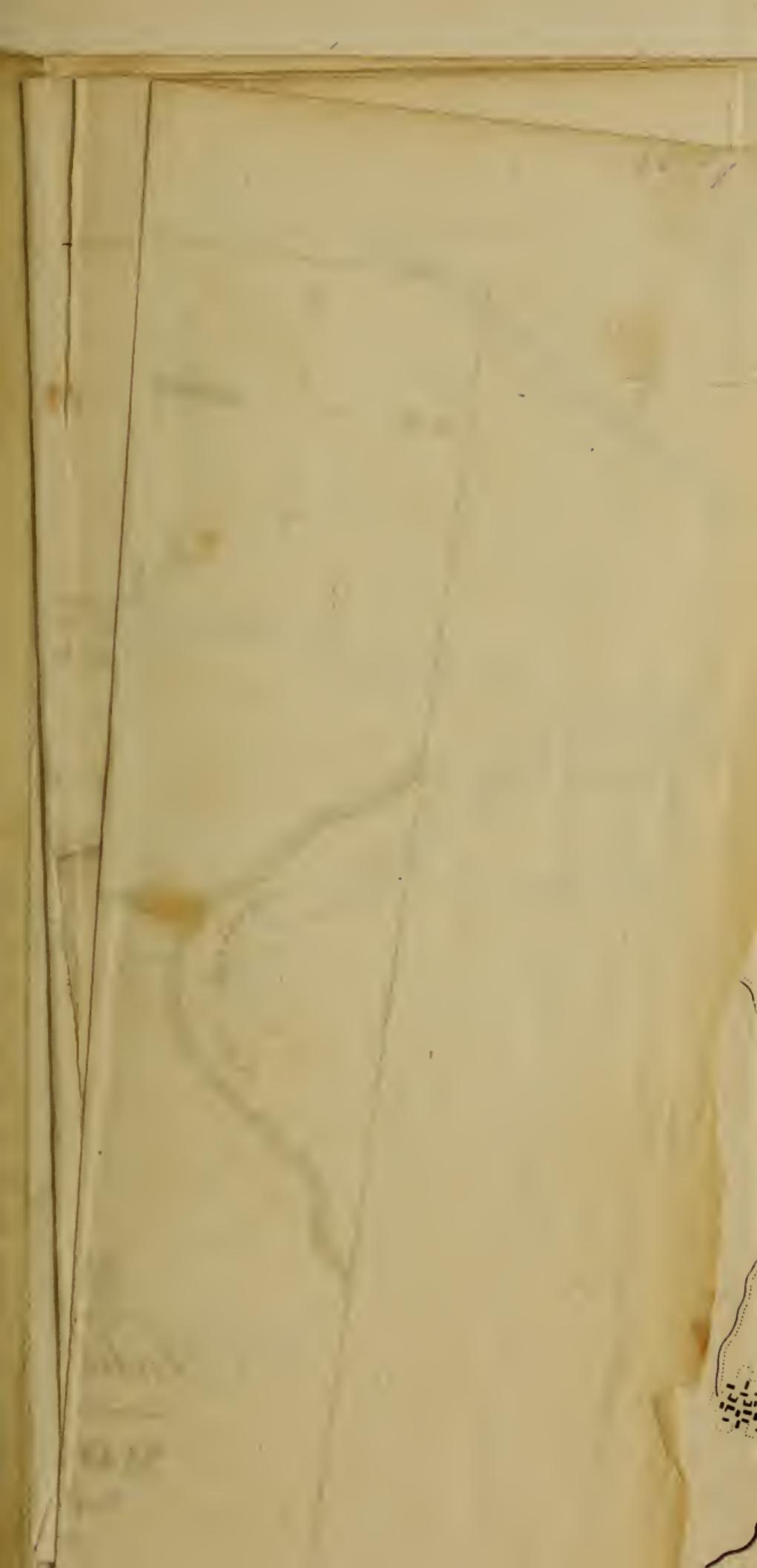
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THE

## CAMPAIGN IN RUSSIA.

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Sabane

A

CIRCUMSTANTIAL NARRATIVE

OF THE

CAMPAIGN IN RUSSIA.

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PART I.—BOOK I.

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*WILNA.*

IF we were to look into our annals for the most brilliant period of our glory, we should find that France had never been more powerful than after the treaty of Tilsit; Spain, under the name of an ally, was, in reality, one of our provinces, from whence we received men, money, and ships. Italy, wisely governed by a prince who was an active warrior, and at the same time an able administrator, being subject to, and obeying the same laws as the French empire, enjoyed an equal share of prosperity with ourselves, and saw with pride that her legions, transported to the Baltic, had given striking proofs of courage, in

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order to procure for France a glorious and useful peace. Germany, alarmed by our colossal aggrandizement, far from opposing our successes, endeavoured merely to ensure her own existence, by a submission to all the great changes which subverted the German constitution. England alone persevered in her enmity towards an ambition so fatal to mankind, considering Napoleon's prosperity as a new cause of fear to herself, and of terror to the continent. She aimed at the honour of putting a stop to that boundless ambition, and represented to the sovereigns of the north, that it was their interest to impede the progress of our extensive power, which was rapidly increasing every day. Vain efforts ! those sovereigns had not yet acquired the requisite degree of conviction, that they must all be united to crush the giant who wished to devour them. Napoleon's passion for invasion, suggested to him, on his return from Tilsit, the idea of declaring to Spain an unjust war, which not only faded his laurels, but afterwards furnished his enemies with the long-wished-for occasion of subverting his power.

A weak prince governed but nominally that unhappy peninsula ; but a perfidious minister, treacherous towards his country, and ungrateful to his king and benefactor, governed the state

with uncommon partiality. With the most abject deference towards foreigners, he degraded the nation, whose rights he seemed to have usurped for no other purpose than to drag it into long and shameful servitude. The credulity of the father, and the moderation of the son, promoted his criminal intentions. He incensed them against each other, and parties were soon formed. The discord arising from which, served the artful Napoleon as a pretext to create a civil war, and to kindle that flame which was requisite for the execution of the most unjust and the most abominable project. It presents in the history of a civilized nation an example of such atrocious ingratitude, that it is impossible to meet with a similar one, even amongst barbarians.

Spain, notwithstanding its proximity to France, was little known to us, and the character of its inhabitants was still less so ; this fatal ignorance misleading the conqueror, induced him to attempt an unfortunate invasion, the miseries of which will, however, be easily forgotten, if we consider that it was like the campaign of Moscow, the primitive cause of those events which brought about the happy deliverance of the world.

It does not enter into my plan to recapitulate an ill-fated aggression which made enemies of two equally generous nations, who had always

been united by a reciprocal esteem ; which would have still continued, but for the perfidious politics of the tyrant, who seemed to support his existence by the hatred of nations. Those struggles, which were remarkable both for their inveteracy and their vicissitudes, will furnish the historian with an interesting subject, and the military with ample matter for meditation. I shall only briefly observe, that Providence appears to have excited in Napoleon the idea of those two unjust wars, for the purpose of convincing the Spaniards and Russians, that an alliance with the vicious will unavoidably prove fatal. As a final moral lesson, this instrument which the Almighty had made use of to accomplish his purpose, was precipitated from one error into another, to shew that the tyranny which attacks all mankind, may be easily repelled, if men, united by harmony, meet under the banner of justice.

Whilst Napoleon vainly endeavoured to clear the peninsula from the English troops which had arrived there, a new storm was gathering in Germany. Austria, whom he had so often humbled, could not tamely submit to the shameful yoke under which her defeats had placed her ; the hatred of the Spaniards, and the great armaments of England, offered her a good opportunity for trying once more the power of her arms, to regain

the states which she had lost, and that preponderance in politics of which she had always been particularly ambitious.

The new war against Austria only opened a new field of triumph to the French military. Landshut, Eckmuhl, and Ratisbon, having been obtained, after a few months of brilliant success, prepared the way for one of the most memorable victories. The prodigious events of Austerlitz were renewed at Wagram, which secured to France the most glorious campaign, and the most decisive results.

The treaty of Vienna which gave us peace, brought several wealthy provinces under our dominion. Wurtemberg and Bavaria were aggrandized by it, and it seemed to promise to Poland her complete re-establishment. But that treaty, dictated by a power which usurped every thing, might, like many former ones, have been productive of another war, if the most august and most unexpected alliance, had not crowned the fortune of the happy Napoleon. Of all the blessings which fortune had granted him, that marriage was undoubtedly the greatest; since it secured, for ever, the destiny of a man, who, having risen from a private rank in society, became allied to a powerful monarch. Dazzled by this prosperity, trying to surpass his former efforts, he provoked fate, and lost the benefit of

all his endeavours. Thus, for want of prudence, that which was so well calculated to cement his power, occasioned his ruin.

That period ought to have been the happiest of Napoleon's life. Who could have enjoyed more prosperous and quiet days? From a private individual, he saw himself raised to the first throne in the world; his whole reign had been a long series of victories, and, to crown his happiness, a son, the object of his most ardent wishes, was born, to succeed him. The people, though oppressed under his government, became accustomed to it, and seemed desirous to secure the crown to his family. All foreign princes, subjected to his power, were his vassals, maintaining his troops, and paying tributes to gratify his luxury and his pleasures. In short, all obeyed him. Nothing was wanting to make him happy! nothing, if one could be happy without a love of justice. But, never having known that sentiment, he could neither enjoy happiness or repose. Possessed of a restless spirit, and tormented by ungovernable ambition, the very excess of his fortune was his ruin. He wished for what could never be obtained; and, not judging rightly of others, he forgot every thing, he forgot himself.

The sovereign of the German empire, tired

of a resistance which had so long been fatal to his arms, fancied for a moment, that he obeyed fate, in yielding to a man to whom every one had yielded: He sacrificed his glory, and even his offspring, to obtain peace; thus realizing those fabulous times, when magnanimous princes devoted their daughters to appease the wrath of some evil spirit, who ravaged their countries.

Every one seemed to submit to the great changes which Napoleon had effected; and the vulgar, whose limited conceptions seldom penetrate into the dark minds of ambitious monarchs, thought that the surprising alliance between this man and an archduchess, must gratify all his immoderate desires; they also expected, that the tender feelings of a parent would convince him, that a throne is not so forcibly cemented by ambitious conquests, purchased by blood and tears, as by wise institutions, which, in making a government popular, would ensure its duration. There never existed a human being who possessed surer means for promoting the happiness of mankind; nothing was required of him but justice and prudence; the nation expected both from him, and granted him that unlimited confidence, which he has since so cruelly abused. Posterity will certainly he-

sitate to decide whether Napoleon has been more culpable for the crimes which he has committed, or for the omission of those good actions which he might have performed, but on which he never bestowed a single thought.

Instead of meditating with calmness and moderation on the best use he might have made of his resources, he ruminated on plans, the execution of which were beyond human powers, forgetting what numberless victims must be sacrificed in the attempt to realize them. Continually tormented by dismal spleen, the least contradiction irritated him. The very idea that there existed a nation sufficiently great and generous, to despise his proposals, and resist his fatal influence, was a recollection sufficient to lacerate his heart, and to poison the happiest moments of his glory.

In hopes of conquering that invincible enemy, he vainly endeavoured to grasp the extremities of Europe. Scarcely did he think that he had secured him on one side, than he escaped him on the other. Thus infuriated at the disappointment of his chimerical plans, he aspired to universal despotism ; for no other reason, than because an isolated nation on the continent, taking advantage of their happy position, had exempted themselves from an intolerable yoke.

From that time he dismissed his ministers, whose wisdom he despised ; he acknowledged no other talents but those which blindly subscribed to his absurd pretensions ; and the greatest men became to him the most abject slaves. Despot of his people and his armies, a slave to his own will, he aspired to domineer over every body, carrying his ambitious views to the extremities of the pole. By an erroneous judgment he adopted false politics ; and thus he converted in the north, as he had before done in the south, the most useful and most potent of his allies, into a dangerous enemy.

In his senseless dreams he overstepped on all sides the natural boundaries of France, allotting her a chimerical destination, and pretended to fear that Russia might place herself on the ancient throne of Constantine, and command the two seas by which Europe is surrounded.

He then played the prophet, predicting to France distant disasters, which might be evaded by sacrificing the present generation to the uncertain happiness of future ones.

Blinded by an excess of prosperity, he fancied that all powers envied him, and, judging of others by himself, he thought Russia looked with secret jealousy upon the union between the most ancient and the most modern empires.

Full of this idea, he pursued his plans of devastation; and desiring, as he said, his dynasty to become the most ancient in Europe, he endeavoured to sanction his usurpation by dethroning legitimate princes in order to give their crowns to his brothers; who, too effeminate to support him in his tyranny, only shone like pale satellites around an ill-boding star.

The treaty of Tilsit appeared but as a truce to those who knew Napoleon's character. Every one, comparing the constantly-growing power of the two great empires, predicted an approaching rupture between them, foreseeing from their increase, the future destruction of the gigantic edifice which both were erecting. The distance which formerly separated them, had likewise separated their interests; but the conquests of France, having rendered her a neighbour of Russia, every thing presaged that a terrible struggle must soon take place between those rival powers, the shock of which might shake the foundation of the world itself,

For more than two years, Russia and France had kept themselves in warlike attitudes; but at length, Napoleon having reinforced the garrison of Dantzic, consisting of strong corps of the army, and completed the cavalry, the artillery-train, and the military equipages, he forbore

no longer to overwhelm Russia with reproaches. Forgetting that, since his last stipulations, he had not only invaded Holland, and the Hanse-towns, but likewise the duchy of Oldenbourg, which belonged to the sister of Alexander. Still he imputed to the latter as a crime, his having renewed a commercial intercourse with England.

From that moment, France made immense preparations; numerous legions hastened from the banks of the Tagus to those of the Oder; and the same soldiers who not long ago had encamped on the fertile plains of Lombardy, saw themselves after three months transported to the barren sands of Poland.

However, nothing had yet transpired respecting those great movements, except the famous *sénatus-consulte*,\* which organized the empire in *cohortes*, *bans*, and *arrière bans*.† Thus the country was going to be engaged in the most bloody contest it had ever sustained, one half of Europe marching against the other half; nor did

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\* Sitting of the Senate, 10 March, 1812.

† Three classes into which men were divided from 25 to 60 years of age, for the defence of the frontiers and the coasts. *Note of the Translator.*

Napoleon suggest a reason to the senate, and still less did that body venture to demand any from him, for a war, in which France was going to exhaust her blood and her treasures.

Under these circumstances all eyes were turned towards Prussia, anxious to discover what step she was going to take. Her fortresses, her whole territory, was invaded by our armies; nevertheless the weight of our alliance appeared to oppose her politics, and to be particularly prejudicial to her interests; and in spite of the constraint and the subjugation in which we kept her, she still hesitated to declare herself, when, to the surprise of the world at large, we learnt that she had at last decided in our favour.\* But those who knew in what manner Napoleon contracted alliances, observed that Prussia did not adhere to ours till she saw Berlin pressed on all sides, and that the duke of Reggio was on the point of entering it as a conqueror. Shortly after, the king of Prussia was obliged to abandon his capital, leaving the command of it to French generals. At this time appeared another treaty of alliance, between France and Austria; the principal clauses of which were

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\* Treaty of alliance (24 Feb. 1812), between H. M. the emperor and king, and H. M. the king of Prussia.

stipulating an auxiliary corps of thirty thousand men, to be furnished by either of the two contracting powers, to her who should be first attacked : and Napoleon, pretending to be threatened by Russia, claimed and obtained the promised succour, which was given to the command of the prince of Schwartzenberg. Thus Napoleon tyrannised kings, as Robespierre tyrannised the people. No one could remain neutral under either of them. The love of peace appeared to them to be treason ; and they both considered moderation as a crime.

In Germany, numerous corps were successively seen marching towards the Oder ; the king of Westphalia at the head of his guards and of two divisions, had already crossed that river, as well as the Bavarians and Saxons. The first corps was at Stettin, the third marched towards that direction, and the fourth, on their arrival at Glogau, replaced the Westphalians, who marched towards Warsaw.

The construction of our army, when it was first formed, was rather striking. Were I to enumerate them, it would resemble the descriptions of Homer, when he speaks of the various people who marched towards the conquest of Ilion. In the month of April, the grand army consisted of eight corps of infantry, each of them

containing at least three divisions, besides one of cavalry (the first corps amounted to five); to which were joined the Imperial guards, composed of about fifty thousand men; and three great corps of cavalry under the name of the reserve. The total of our forces may have amounted to three hundred thousand infantry, and sixty thousand cavalry. More than a thousand pieces of cannon, distributed amongst the different corps of the army, constituted the artillery-force.

For a long time past, the prince of Eckmuhl had commanded the five divisions which composed the first corps of the army; the second was intrusted to the duke of Reggio; the third, to the duke of Elchingen; the fourth, known by the name of the *army of Italy*, and which contained the royal guards, was commanded by the prince Viceroy. Prince Poniatowski at the head of his Poles, formed the fifth corps. The Bavarians, incorporated into the sixth, were under the orders of Count Gouvion St. Cyr. The Saxons were counted as the seventh corps, whose chief was General Regnier. The Westphalians, marching under the orders of their king, took rank in the army as the eighth corps. As for the ninth, only a skeleton of it was formed, but it was destined for the duke of Bel-

luno; and, lastly, the tenth corps, commanded by marshal the duke of Tarentum, was composed of Prussians under general Grawert, and included no French, except the division of general Grandjean.

The Russian army opposed to us, was divided into two parts, under the denomination of first and second army of the west ; the one under the orders of general Barclay de Tolly, and the other commanded by prince Bagration. The number of divisions amounted to forty-seven, amongst which, eight consisted of cavalry. The emperor Alexander, who, on the 26th of April, arrived at Wilna with all his staff, had been long prepared to repulse our attacks. But those who had studied our system of war, advised that monarch not to hazard a battle, being convinced that Napoleon's ambition would lead him into savage countries, which, during the rigorous season, would be the grave of his armies. Although Prussia had declared for us, still prudence required that we should mistrust an alliance which was contracted by force ; the French garrisons in the fortified places used the utmost precaution, particularly in Glogau, where the fourth corps were assembled ; its vicinity to Breslau, whither the king of Prussia had gone with the remainder of his troops, naturally

awakened our fears, and induced the governor to guard against a *coup de main*, which might have fatal to the enterprises of France.

The fourth corps, which arrived from Italy under the denomination of the *army of observation*, seemed, from its title, to be destined to advance alternately in front of the grand army, to observe its flanks, and lastly, to join it when great events required its assistance. Having had the honour to belong to this corps, I thought it incumbent on me to describe it, particularly as their single operations have been more interesting than either of the others, having commonly been added to the centre corps, whenever great events obliged Napoleon to unite his army.

The Viceroy, before he took the command of the fourth corps, which had been in the interim under the orders of the duke of Abrantes, was called to Paris, where his conferences with the Emperor led to a belief that he was destined to higher functions than those of a chief of a corps of the army. For a long time the rumour had been spread that Napoleon, desirous of terminating the war in Spain, had announced in council that he intended to confide to a young prince the government of the empire, if circumstances should oblige him to absent himself from his capital. But those great hopes, which since the

repudiation of his mother seemed to have no foundation, were soon destroyed. The Viceroy, seven or eight days after his arrival in Paris, having received his instructions, took the road to Poland, and arrived in Glogau on the 12th of May.

During the day which he remained at Glogau, he reviewed the troops placed under his orders, and was greatly satisfied with the fine appearance of the fifteenth division, consisting solely of Italians, which amounted to thirteen thousand men. The soldiers who composed it were so warlike, that General Pino, though first captain of the royal guards, thought it an honour to command them.

The fourth corps was to assemble at Plock ; the Bavarian army was there already, and the Prince Viceroy arrived in this town by way of Posen, a few days before his army. He employed this time in reconnoitring the banks of the Narew, and in combining, by a system of defence, the lines formed by this river and by the lakes which extend from Angerburg to Joannisburg. His highness particularly examined the fortress of Modlin, where the King of Westphalia was already arrived ; the conference between these two princes appeared to indicate that the banks of the Bug and of the Narew, would be the

theatre of the war. However, a few days afterwards, all eyes were turned towards the Emperor, who arrived at Thorn ; the Viceroy went to pay his respects to him, and on his return he made the necessary dispositions to effect a movement on the 4th of June.

On that day our corps marched for Soldau, where it arrived on the 6th. The troops were allowed a stay of two days, which were spent in constructing the necessary ovens for the supplies of the army. We then marched to Villemberg, where we remained two days ; and three days afterwards we arrived at Rastembourg, a neat little town surrounded by lakes, which afforded resources to the army, being the largest and most populous town we had yet met with since our departure from Glogau. From Rastembourg we marched to Lötzen and afterwards to Oletzko, the last town in East-Prussia. Two leagues further on we entered Poland, and soon perceived the striking difference between these two countries. In the one, the houses are clean and well built, in the other, they are dirty and of a clumsy construction. The inhabitants of the former are civil and hospitable, whilst those of the latter exhibit only dirty and disgusting Jews. With regard to petty nobles, many of them are too indigent to maintain their dignity ; but the

great lords on the contrary, are brave, magnificent, and generous ; honour and patriotism will ever make them true heroes. The peasantry are few in number, and this defect in the population, joined to the barrenness of the soil, accounts for the uncultivated state of the country. Its sandy plains, planted with bad rye, seem doomed to sterility.

We arrived at Kalvary, which is a great borough full of Jews ; at Marienpol we found a similar population. Tired of beholding the numbers, and the disgusting appearance of these people, we used to say that Poland was but another Judea, in which now and then only a few Poles were to be seen.

During this march, Napoleon left Thorn and visited the fortress of Dantzic, which his thirst for dominion made him consider as the most important part of his empire ; from thence he went to Osterode, and passed rapidly through the towns of Leibstadt and Kreutzburg, in the neighbourhood of Heilsberg, Eylau, and Friedland ; places which had witnessed his greatest military exploits. On his arrival at Königsberg, he made every preparation for his great enterprise ; he reviewed numerous divisions, visited the fortress of Pillau, and a few days afterwards,

marching with the centre of his army, he went along the Pregel to Gumbinen.

Napoleon thought to intimidate Russia by his preparations, and to compel her to submit to his laws ; while he himself acted in direct opposition to good order and the maintenance of peace. Russia, from an excess of moderation seldom to be met with in great powers, consented that France should keep a garrison in Dantzic ; but she required in justice the evacuation of Prussia, in order to leave between these two great empires, a country unoccupied by the troops of either power. These wise and moderate conditions were called by Napoleon, *arrogant and altogether extraordinary summonses !\** and on Russia's formally refusing to listen without these preliminaries, to the embassy of Count Lauriston, Napoleon enraged, exclaimed, in the frantic tone which he always adopted on meeting with the slightest contradiction ; “ The vanquished “ assume the tone of conquerors ; *a fatality in-* “ *volves them, let their destinies be fulfilled.*” Leaving Gumbinen that very instant, he went to Wilkowiski, 22d of June, 1812, and issued the following proclamation in his general orders :

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\* Second Bulletin of the grand army.

" SOLDIERS,

" The second Polish war is begun ; the first,  
" terminated at Friedland and at Tilsit : at  
" Tilsit, Russia vowed an eternal alliance to  
" France, and war to England. " She now breaks  
" her vows, and refuses to give any explication  
" of her strange conduct ; let not the French  
" eagles repass the Rhine to leave our allies at  
" her discretion.

" Russia is hurried away by a fatality ! her  
" destinies will be fulfilled. Does she think us  
" degenerated ? Are we no more the same sol-  
" diers who fought at Austerlitz ? She places  
" us between dishonour and war. Our choice  
" cannot be difficult. Let us march across the  
" Niemen ! and carry the war into her country.  
" This second Polish war will be as glorious for  
" the French arms as the first has been ; but  
" the peace we shall conclude, will carry along  
" with it its own guarantee, and will put a stop  
" to the fatal influence which Russia, for fifty  
" years past, has exercised in Europe."

This proclamation reached us at Kalwary ; unbecoming real grandeur, it was only remarkable for its excessive boasting, and for the prophetic tone of its contents. However, although it was but a monotonous repetition of the same

ideas so often exhibited ; it excited the ardour of our soldiers, always ready to listen to any thing that could flatter their courage. Elated with the idea of entering on Russian ground, to begin the second Polish war, they, with pride, left behind them a river, at which they had stopped on the close of the first. The word Niemen inflamed their imagination—they burned to pass it : and this desire was the more natural ; for, independent of the spirit of conquest, the miserable state of Poland augmented every day our sufferings and deprivations. To silence our complaints, the territory of Russia was always held out to us as the promised land.

The Russian army opposed to ours, was composed of six great corps : the first, twenty thousand strong, and commanded by the prince of Wittgenstein, occupied Rossiena and Keidanouï. The second corps, also twenty thousand men, under the orders of General Bagawout, guarded Kowno. The third, consisting of twenty-four thousand men, under General Schomoaloff, was posted at New-Troki. In the country between New-Troki and Lida, the fourth corps was stationed, commanded by General Tutschkoff. These four corps, together with the guards, formed what the Russians called, the *First Army of the West*. The second army consisted of the

fifth corps, amounting to forty thousand men, and of the sixth corps, called that of Doctorow, of eighteen thousand men. This second army, commanded in chief by Prince Bagration, was encamped at Grodno, Lida, and all over Wolhynia. General Markoff organized in this province the ninth and fifteenth divisions, which were to form the seventh corps, and which acted, in the sequel, under the orders of General Tormasow, against the duchy of Warsaw.

This was the position of the Russians beyond the Niemen, when the King of Naples, commander-in-chief of our cavalry, established his head-quarters within two leagues on this side of the river, (23d June). He had with him the two corps of cavalry, commanded by Generals Nansouty and Montbrun, each composed of three divisions. The first corps took post at the opening of the great forest of Pilwisky. The second corps and the guards marched in the rear. The third, fourth, and sixth corps, advanced by Marienpol, and marched at a day's distance. The King of Westphalia, with the fifth, seventh, and eighth corps, directed his march to Grodno, up the Narew, and facing the army of Prince Bagration.

The pontoons under the orders of General Eblé, arrived the same day at the Niemen. It was

then that Napoleon, disguised as a private Polish soldier, and in company with the general of the engineers, Haxo, visited the line of the Niemen. From the heights which command Kowno, he discovered the most advantageous point; and, towards eight o'clock at night, the army was put in motion: three light companies of the division Morand (first division of the first corps) passed the Niemen, and protected the construction of three bridges, which were thrown across the river.

At daybreak, that is to say, about one o'clock in the morning, we were close to Kowno. General Pajol having pushed forward the advanced-guard, occupied the town with one battalion, and drove before him the enemy's cavalry, who retired as we advanced. On the 24th and 25th, the army continued to cross the river at the three bridges. At the same time, Napoleon, on his arrival at Kowno, had another bridge thrown across the Wilia, near to that town; while the King of Naples marched towards Zismori, and the Marshals, Prince of Eckmuhl and Duke of Elchingen went the one to Roumchichki, and the other to Kormelov. The following day (27th June) our light cavalry was within ten leagues of Wilna. The day after, about two o'clock in the morning, the King of

Naples continued his march, supported by the division of cavalry of General Bruyères, and by the first corps. The Russians fell back on all sides till behind the Wilia, after burning the bridge and their magazines. A deputation, consisting of the principal inhabitants of Wilna, now delivered to Napoleon the keys of the town. He entered it about twelve o'clock, and proceeded immediately to the advanced posts of General Bruyères, in order to ascertain the direction in which the enemy retreated. They were pursued on the left of the Wilia, when, in a charge of cavalry, the captain of hussars, Octave de Ségur was wounded and taken prisoner. Thus was this distinguished officer the first in this campaign who fell into the hands of the Russians.

The point chosen by Napoleon to pass the Niemen was difficult to defend, Kowno being commanded by a high mountain on our side, and which completely overhangs the town. But if this position had been even less propitious to us, it was not in the plan of operations of the Russians to oppose our first efforts. It is said, that the Emperor Alexander had taken every means to dispute the passage of the Niemen; but that the moment at which the attack was to take place, General Barclay de Tolly, throwing

himself at the feet of his master had entreated him not to combat a formidable army which nothing could resist ; adding, that Napoleon ought to be suffered to pass like a torrent, keeping in reserve their forces, to be employed against him, when his own should begin to fail.

I cannot warrant the authenticity of this anecdote : but what contributes to its credibility is, that the Emperor Alexander, after having remained six weeks at Wilna, inspected his armies, reconnoitred the principal points which were capable of defence ; suddenly abandoned this line without fighting, and ordered the retreat across the Dwina and the Nieper.

At Wilna we all read the proclamation issued by the Emperor of Russia, when he was informed that the French troops had passed the Niemen ; it paints so well the greatness and equity of Alexander, that, in comparing it with the one published by Napoleon at Wilkowiski with so much arrogance, one may obtain a perfect knowledge of the characters of these two conquerors, on whom the eyes of the world were then fixed. It was thus worded :—

“ *Wilna, the 25th of June, 1812.*

“ For a long time past we had remarked on the part of the Emperor of the French, hostile pro-

“ cedings towards Russia ; but we had always  
“ hoped to avert them by conciliatory and paci-  
“ fic means. At length, experiencing a conti-  
“ nued renewal of direct offences, in spite of our  
“ desire to maintain tranquillity, we have been  
“ obliged to complete and to assemble our armies.  
“ But even then, we still flattered ourselves to  
“ succeed in a reconciliation, by remaining on  
“ the frontiers of our empire ; without violating  
“ the peace, and being prepared only for our de-  
“ fence. All these conciliatory and pacific  
“ means could not preserve the peace we de-  
“ sired. The Emperor of the French, by sud-  
“ denly attacking our army at Kowno, has been  
“ the first to declare war. As nothing, there-  
“ fore, can make him sensible of our desire to  
“ maintain peace, we have no choice but to op-  
“ pose our forces to those of the enemy, invok-  
“ ing the aid of the Almighty, witness and de-  
“ fender of the truth. It is unnecessary for me  
“ to recall to the minds of the commanders, to  
“ the chiefs of the corps, and to the soldiers,  
“ their duty and their bravery ; the blood of the  
“ valiant Sclavonians runs in their veins. War-  
“ riors ! you defend your religion, your country,  
“ and your liberty ! I am with you. God is  
“ against the aggressor.

(Signed)

ALEXANDER.

Whilst the whole of our army was concentrating about Wilna, the second Russian corps, under General Bagawout, effected its retreat across the Dwina; Prince Wittgenstein likewise was retreating to Wilkomer, since the Duke of Reggio, by marching to Janow and Chatoui, had forced him to abandon Samogitia. On the 28th they met near Develtovo, a smart cannonade commenced, but Prince Wittgenstein did not maintain his position; and, driven back by our troops as far as the Dwina, he passed the bridge thrown over this river with so much precipitation, that he had not time to burn it.

The Russians were repulsed beyond the river, when the fifth, seventh, and eighth corps, under the orders of Prince Poniatowski and the King of Westphalia, took possession of Grodno, and closely pressed the second army of the west, under Prince Bagration. Intrenched, however, in a strong position, he resisted all attacks; and by a happy employment of his numerous corps of cos-sacks, led by the Hetman Platoff, he would no doubt have maintained a long time the provinces confided to him, if, after the evacuation of Wilna, he had not been ordered to join General Barclay de Tolly. In order to prevent this junction, Prince Eckmuhl was instantly detached from our centre, to occupy the road to Minsk.

On the 29th of June, the fourth corps, which had hitherto remained in observation behind the Niemen, came in sight of this long-desired river. On arriving at Pilony, the place appointed for our passage, we found the Viceroy, the Duke of Abrantes, and all the staff, who, notwithstanding the rainy weather, were busy in constructing a bridge. The artillery of the royal guards was posted on a platform commanding the opposite shore ;—a wise, but useless precaution ; for, on reconnoitring beyond the Niemen, we learned that every thing was in the greatest tranquillity on that side.

We had nothing more to fear for the success of our passage, for an aid-de-camp of the Viceroy, sent with a message to Napoleon, had informed us, that our troops, after having passed the defile of Kowno, at Roumchichki, without meeting any obstacle, were arrived at Zismori, that even the positions between Rouikontoui and Wilna had been but slightly defended by the Russians ; and that having, above all, constructed no redoubts on the height within two leagues of this town, the emperor had entered it on the 28th instant, preceded by the Polish Uhlans of the 8th regiment, commanded by Prince Radzivil. The report of this officer mentioned, that the suburbs had suffered a little from the rapacity of the soldiers, but

order having been speedily re-established, every thing took its natural course ; he likewise added, that this great and populous town afforded resources to the army, and was favourably disposed towards the views of Napoleon.

The following day, the thirteenth and fourteenth divisions, under Generals Delzons and Broussier, quietly effected their passage ; and the day after (1st July), the royal guards, followed by the division Pino, effected theirs. Thus all the Italian troops united, passed the Niemen in presence of their Viceroy. They expressed their sense of this honour by spontaneous acclamations, and this prince must in his turn have felt great satisfaction in beholding the soldiers whom he had raised passing into an enemy's country, especially when he saw them at a distance of six hundred leagues from their native soil, preserve the same order and the same appearance as if manœuvring in front of his palace.

Scarcely had we reached the opposite shore when we appeared to breathe a new air. However, the roads were bad, the forests gloomy, and the villages still more deserted ; but the imagination, inflamed by a spirit of conquest, was enchanted, and cherished illusions which were but too soon destroyed.

Indeed, our stay at Pilony during rainy weather was marked by such extraordinary disasters, that any man, without being superstitious, would have regarded them as the presage of our future misfortunes. In this wretched village, the Viceroy himself had no lodgings ; we were heaped upon one another under sheds, and were exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather. An extreme scarcity made us anticipate the horrors of hunger ; the rain fell in torrents, and overwhelmed men and horses, who had no shelter ; the first resisted, but the badness of the roads completed the destruction of the latter. In the environs of Pilony, they were seen dropping by hundreds ; on the road, nothing but dead horses, overturned waggons, and scattered baggage, was to be seen. It was in the month of July that we suffered from cold, rain, and scarcity. So many disasters were a sad prediction of the future ; every one began to dread it, but the sun reappeared on the horizon, the clouds dispersed, and from that moment we thought the fine season would last for ever.

After a march of two hours through marshy ground, we arrived at the borough of Kroni (1st July), in which the *chateau* and all the houses are built of wood : (I make this observation here, because in Russia most of the villages

are thus constructed; whenever I find them different I shall remark it). We found in this borough some brandy, which the soldiers seized with great avidity. This place not being inhabited by any Jews, the houses were all deserted; and, this circumstance convinced us, that the enemy, in order to ruin the country through which we were going to pass, had carried along with them the inhabitants and the cattle. The next day (2d July) we received orders to march to Zismori, in order to rejoin the great road which the emperor had taken. Arrived in this great borough, we found only some Jews, quite frightened at the horrid tumult occasioned by our passage. The primary orders were to stop there, but on the arrival of the Viceroy, the staff continued their route that day to Melangani, leaving the division Pino at Zismori, and those of Generals Delzons and Broussier in the environs of Strasounouï. The following day (3d July) we went to Ricontouï, a miserable village, with a little *chateau* of wood on the left, and on the right, a church built upon an eminence. The prince did not stop here, but went on to a *chateau* placed almost at the entrance of the cross-road leading to New-Troki.

Our corps, hoping to proceed to Wilna, were disagreeably surprised, when they perceived

(July 4th) that our advanced-guard took a direction towards New-Troki. Every one complained of it; saying, that a fatality attached to our corps, who, having need of repose, were prevented from entering a town where they had expected to recruit themselves after a long and tedious march. Being deceived in this hope, they endeavoured to console us for that disappointment, by assuring us that we should go to Witepsk and Smolensko, which two towns would soon make us forget Wilna.

After four tedious hours, during which we had crossed nothing but forests and dirty foot-paths, we arrived at last near New-Troki, which is situated on an eminence, and surrounded by lakes. This pleasant place formed a striking contrast to the road which we had just traversed, and every one admired its fine situation, and the charming effect which was produced by a large convent on the top of a mountain, which overlooked the town. Others were struck with the appearance of those impenetrable forests, and the clearness of the waters, which are said never to freeze. Those who had any idea of painting were never tired of admiring this beautiful spot. In the middle of the lake was an old ruined castle, the darkened walls of which projected on one side over the surface of the water, and on

the other they seemed to touch the gilded horizon.

Troki appeared at first a delightful spot, but the illusion ceased the moment we entered it. We had scarcely approached the first houses when a number of Jews, followed by women, children, and old men, who, throwing themselves at our feet, implored us to deliver them from the rapacity of the soldiers, who robbed and destroyed every thing they found in the houses. We could not grant them any thing but mere consolation. The borough where we were quartered had no magazines, and our soldiers having been long deprived of their rations, subsisted now only on pillage. This caused the greatest confusion.

And this fatal want of discipline is the more pernicious, as it is always a certain sign of the approaching ruin of an army. The houses at Troki had all been deprived of their furniture, the inhabitants in their flight having taken away every thing; and the houses of the Jews, which were disgustingly dirty, had been pillaged by the soldiers. Thus an abode, which we had expected to find so agreeable to us, was highly unpleasant and uncomfortable. We did not meet with any straw to sleep upon; and even the forage for the horses was procured from a distance of about four leagues.

As it was probable that we should stay at Troki, the emperor having remained at Wilna, the Viceroy went to him, and they had some long conferences. Several officers also obtained leave to go there, and had an opportunity to witness the artifices which Napoleon made use of to ensure his conquest. His pompous promises excited the enthusiasm of the people, and obtained from them the greatest sacrifices. The nobles also seconded the conqueror's endeavours to ensure the independence of Poland, and to restore to her the splendour which she had possessed during the reigns of the Jagellons, Casimirs, and Sobieskies.

The sight of the Polish standards, placed on the walls of the ancient capital of the Dukes of Lithuania, excited the enthusiasm of all the inhabitants, and recalled glorious recollections to the minds of those who cherished the honour of their ancient country. Nothing, however, could more forcibly recall their former greatness, than to meet again on the borders of the Wilia, the same warriors who had devoted the time of their exile on the Nile, the Tyber, the Tagus, and the Danube, to make the Polish name honourable and glorious. The air was rent with joyful exclamations ; crowds followed their steps ; every body wished to see them, and to engrave on their hearts the

image of those brave compatriots ; and all felt the noble desire of marching under the same banners.

Napoleon, who had received the whole corps of the university, questioned the rector on the different branches of science, which were taught in that celebrated seminary ; intending afterwards to reorganize its civil administration, which had been completely injured by the departure of its chiefs, and by the loss of all the books and registers which belonged to the archives of the town. He divided the invaded provinces into so many different districts, nominating inspectors, receivers, commissaries of police, and, above all, intendants, according to the custom in France, in order to hasten the payment of his numberless requisitions. But he endeavoured, above all, to stimulate the Lithuanians to make levies en masse, for the formation of new corps. He offered arms to all the peasants who wished to revolt against their masters, and endeavoured, as had been done at the commencement of our Revolution, to cause a civil war between the people and the nobility.

Those plans certainly produced some movements in the town where the Emperor commanded ; but, in the boroughs and the country, they were not at all favourable to the projected revolution. Napoleon, however, continued to invite the Lithuanians to assist him ; and, to im-

pose on them, he undeavoured to astonish the vulgar, and at the same audience he spoke of theatres, religion, war, and the arts. He would ride about all hours of the day, and after having ordered some new bridge or some new fortifications to be erected, he returned to affairs of state. Sometimes he affected so much unconcern, that, on the eve of a battle, he went to a ball or a concert.

The commission which was formed for the general administration of Lithuania, consisted, at first, only of five members ; but Napoleon added to their number in proportion as his partisans increased. The day on which that commission was instituted, three proclamations were issued. The first, which was addressed to the people, announced the installation of the provisional government of Lithuania, adding, how grateful every one ought to be towards him who had established it. The next exhorted the clergy to second the zeal of the nation, and to obtain, by fervent prayers, the favour of the Almighty. The third, the object of which was to recall the Lithuanians who were in the service of Russia, contained the following words :—

“ POLANDERS,

“ You are under Russian banners ; you were

“ allowed to serve that power, whilst you had  
“ no longer a country of your own; but all is  
“ now changed. *Poland* is newly created; you  
“ must now fight for her complete re-establish-  
“ ment, and oblige the Russians to acknowledge  
“ those rights, of which you had been deprived  
“ by injustice and usurpation. The general  
“ confederation of Poland and Lithuania, recalls  
“ every Polander from the Russian service.  
“ Generals of Poland, officers and soldiers!  
“ listen to the voice of your country; quit the  
“ banners of your oppressors; come, and join  
“ us under the eagle of the Jagellons, the Casi-  
“ mirs, and Sobieskies! your country requests  
“ it of you, and both honour and religion com-  
“ mand it.”\*

The committee of the government at Wilna, who merely acquiesced with Napoleon's views to sooth the sufferings of the people, which the horrors of the war had brought on them, were extremely zealous in every thing which could promote the interest of the administration. The department of Wilna was already formed, and the invaded territory was divided into eleven sub-districts. That organization, to all appear-

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\* See Lithuanian Courier, July 7, 1812.

ance advantageous, produced no good whatever. The country was pillaged, the villages deserted, and all the peasants fled into the woods ; we saw only a few miserable Jews, covered with rags, who, from a spirit of avarice, preferred exposing themselves to the insults of our soldiers, rather than abandon their infected habitations. In short, to give an idea of the disorder which prevailed under that pretended organization, I shall only mention, that when the sub-prefect from New-Troki went to Wilna, to take possession of his post there, he was detained by our troops, who took every thing from him ; even his own escort robbed him of his provisions and clothes ; and, when he at last arrived on foot in that wretched condition, every one thought him a spy, although he was destined to be our first administrator.

The pleasing hopes with which every one had flattered himself at first, began to vanish, when it was known, that our chief had the ambitious desire of placing a new crown on his head ; and, notwithstanding he was unable to consolidate any thing, he did not cease talking of conquering immense provinces, and of subjecting to the same laws and the same sceptre, countries which widely differed both in their habits and their climates. Blind to the want of discipline

in his armies, he occasioned the ruin of the rich, and the despair of the poor ; and induced the Lithuanians to consider those as their greatest aggressors, who had promised to become their deliverers. He exposed us thus to the hatred of the people ; and, weighed down by his tyranny, we became its first victims.

Whilst all this happened at Wilna, Warsaw might have exhibited the greatest events, if she had not been under the influence of a man who trifled with nations, and whose plans, requiring maturity, were always frustrated, when their execution required calmness and reflection. Thus did the unhappy Poles, relying on glittering promises, assemble in their capital (June 28), and formed a diet. The committee gave an abridgment of an eloquent report, in which the orator stated the importance of the work, which had been intrusted to his care. He recalled to the recollection of his auditors, in an energetic manner, that Poland, from being placed in the centre of Europe, had formerly been a distinguished empire, and mistress of an extensive and fertile country. Equally famous for her warlike spirit, and for her arts, she had kept, for centuries past, with unremitting care, her boundaries free from the invasion of barbarians, who wished in vain to subjugate civilized

nations. Adding, that the honour of filling their throne, had always been an object of universal desire ; and, if some little divisions ever arose amongst themselves, they only obscured for a short time their own horizon, without carrying the tempest abroad. He enumerated at large, what their beloved country had suffered from the ambition of Russia, who had insulted a powerful nation by frequent dismemberments. He dwelt particularly on the last period when Poland was abolished by a triple partition, and Warsaw heard, amidst the cries of a ferocious conqueror, the lamentations at Praga, where the whole population fell victims to the sword and the flames. He demonstrated that such a fatal superiority of power, must ultimately injure the rights of nations, and subject the whole world to its empire ; shewing that Russia, continually oppressing Poland, approached gradually towards Germany, with a view to govern her likewise.

After that rapid exposition of facts, the speaker made a less animated, but not a less eloquent, enumeration of all the weighty reasons which ought to unite Poland to France. Europe, said he, requires some rest after twenty-five years of violent agitation. Her system will be imperfect, nor can she be sure of receiving

the reward of her struggles and her blood, as long as those northerly dens are permitted to send forth hordes, whom we can no longer pretend to despise. They are no longer men whom necessity alone forced to quit their savage habitations, and to seek in all directions some enjoyments which were denied them in their severe climates. A blind instinct served those men formerly instead of arts, which civilize or defend other nations. But now you find the arts of polished people united to former barbarism. The Russians, having now learnt from the Europeans offensive and defensive operations, are become practised in mischief. From endeavouring to be in some respects the equal of the European, he may soon become his master. Superstitious and submissive slaves blindly obey the orders of government, to whom every kind of cruelty is familiar. For a century past they have been busily employed in drying up all those dykes which contain a torrent, threatening their destruction. How often have the Russians crossed over them, either for their own interest or at the call of imprudent princes, to whom they brought slavery instead of assistance. Russia, in the course of fifty years, has twenty times overwhelmed the south of Europe with her arms. Constantinople has never recovered from having

been subverted by that power. He finished with this exclamation:—“ Henceforth the “ children of the Piasts and the Jagellons “ will be proud to bear a name which was “ the glory of their ancestors, a name which “ inspired them with awe, who, for a time, “ through fraud and crime, had become masters. “ Let us not doubt, for one minute, that this “ country, once so rich in heroes, will recover “ all her wonted glory. She will produce new “ Sigismonds, and new Sobieskis. She will “ shine with increased splendour, and the “ nations, in again doing us justice, will ac- “ knowledge that nothing was requisite in “ Poland for the growth of every virtue, but “ the cultivation of its soil by free and untied “ hands.”

Turning afterwards to the venerable old man,\* who, from his services and merits, presided at the assembly, he addressed him in the following flattering apostrophe:—“ Nestor of the Polish “ patriots, when you left them you took away “ with you the gods who had escaped the over- “ throw of your country. They return to it “ to-day, expecting to be constantly adored, “ and to inhabit it as a temple; around which the “ whole nation, instructed by her misfortunes,

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\* Prince Czartoryski, Grand Marshal at the diet.

" and formed to vigilance by the shocks which  
" she has sustained, will not cease to be always  
" vigilant ; still adhering to the virtues which  
" have distinguished the Polanders, and which  
" they pledge themselves to defend with the  
" blood of their children."

After this speech the orator submitted another report to the diet, in which he explained the motives that had induced the committee to draw up the act of the confederation, declaring that it was the wish of the nation to make it acceptable to the King of Saxony ; who, too wise and too virtuous to object to it, they hoped would give his consent, and, under divine Providence, unite to see the arms of Lithuania reappear in their escutcheon ; and to hear from the fertile countries of Wolhynia, and the extensive plains of Podolia and the Ukrain, the cheering sounds of, *Long live Poland ! Long live that country ?*

The committee produced the act of the confederation, the chief articles of which consisted, in making all the parties of ancient Poland, which had been detached, consent to the formation of the new kingdom, to recall the Polanders from the Russian service ; and lastly, to send a deputation to the Emperor Napoleon, soliciting his powerful protection for the regeneration of Poland.

The deputation was admitted to Napoleon the night before his departure from Wilna. They submitted to him the act of the confederation, of which we have just spoken. The conqueror gave them evasive promises, perhaps offended that the noble Polish nation had not thrown themselves at his feet to obtain the honour of becoming a part of the great empire. The liberty which they seemed to desire, surprised him and made him uneasy, for fear the assembly which he had convoked, and which seemed to second his views, might one day prove less submissive to his wishes. It is the peculiar character of tyrants, to be distrustful even when they are doing some good, to take umbrage at the objects of their own protection, and to feel provoked by the independence of others, if it has even been their own work. Napoleon therefore made no promises, but exacted, as preliminaries, enormous sacrifices, and a devotion to his interest, with which the Poles could not comply until they obtained the promise of their future happiness. He wanted the provinces subjected to Russia to declare themselves immediately against her, and demanded lastly the renunciation of Galicia, because he had guaranteed to Austria the integrity of her states.

If all those extensive plans had been conceived

by a prudent head, more anxious for the interest of nations than for the gratification of its own ambition, there is no doubt, that although gigantic, they might have been realized. Napoleon having attained such a degree of power, that it was not requisite for him to declare war to obtain an end, might, with prudent and conciliatory politics, have made more lasting, and even more extensive conquests, than he could have procured by his arms. Posterity will see that he was blinded by too much prosperity, employing immense means for his own downfal, whilst he might have succeeded without venturing or losing any thing. But, an enemy to whatever required patience and reflection, he knew nothing but force; and heaven permitted that he himself should be crushed by a superiority of that power, which till then had been his only law. The brave Polanders, seeing the desperate state of their country, considered all their plans as chimerical, when they perceived that Napoleon, more ambitious, and less loyal than Charles XII., coveted the Polish crown, and only promised them his assistance from a wish to profit by their resentment against Russia. Thus that happy conqueror, restless, even on the most glorious throne of Europe, was misguided by the excess of his conquests, and thought that he could not

cement his fortune better than by overthrowing the whole world, and by renewing in the north the atrocious wars of the middle age, when nations, enraged against each other, committed every excess of barbarism.

## BOOK II.

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### *WHITEPSK.*

WHILST Napoleon remained at Wilna, Marshal Davoust proceeded to Minsk, in pursuit of Prince Bagration, who strove to make a junction with the army of Barclay de Tolly. By that movement we hindered the Russian Prince from marching on the Dwina, forcing him thus to proceed towards Mohilow, on the Nieper, whither he was pursued by the first corps, and the cavalry of General Grouchy. All our other corps, which formed the centre, directed their way towards Dinabourg. The fourth corps, the two French divisions, and the royal guards, went the road of Paradomin to Ochmiana; whilst the Viceroy, the division Pino, and all the cavalry, marched to Rudniki.

This latter movement was in consequence of information that the Hetman Platow, at the head of four thousand cossacks, having been separated from the corps of Bagration, was ex-

pected on the road to Lida, where he would endeavour to effect a junction with the Russian army, which had evacuated Wilna. At this news the Viceroy began to march, but the road to Rudniki was so bad, that the cavalry of the royal guard was obliged to pursue a different route. It is not possible to form an idea of the difficulties which presented themselves on that road, entirely formed of roots of fir-trees, which were placed on the marshy ground. The horses in crossing over these pieces of wood frequently separated them, and, falling between them, broke their legs. If, to avoid those difficulties, we turned to the right or left, we were in danger of falling into ditches, from which there was no getting out.

The etat-major, after having lost some horses belonging to his escort, at last succeeded in extricating himself from that dangerous passage, and arrived at Rudniki in the middle of the night. The following morning (July 8th) we began our march towards Jachounoui on the great road, from whence we proceeded to Mal-Solechniki. The Prince, however, would not stop there, but pursued his route to Bol-Solechniki, where he intended to remain during the night, hoping to receive some tidings of the cossacks, whom he had orders to pursue. The

following day we continued our march, and arrived at a castle a short distance from Soubotniki.

The Viceroy was obliged to stop there, the bad roads having impeded the progress of the thirteenth and fourteenth divisions, as well as the Italian corps, therefore we had nothing but the light cavalry with us. The order for their removal, which had been sent them by some careless person, was returned to the chief of the staff, so that those troops receiving no orders remained stationary, whilst it was believed that they were marching. At last, seeing that they did not arrive, some intelligent officers were sent out in all directions, who succeeded, after a long search, to make the division of Pino leave the marshes of Rudniki, and to lead the guard towards Ochmiana. The Viceroy, in the mean time, after having searched in vain for the cossacks, returned immediately, and marched towards Jachounoui, where he joined the thirteenth and fourteenth divisions. On the following day (July 12th) they all took their direction towards Smorghoni, where they joined the rest of the troops who composed the fourth corps.

The borough Smorghoni is rather extensive ; still all the houses, except two or three, are built of wood. A little river, over which there is a

bridge, divides the castle from the town. The population consists chiefly of Jews, who are entirely engaged in commerce; for that reason the place, though but little remarkable, was agreeable to the whole army, for they were able to procure bread and beer.

During the day which we rested at Smorghoni, we erected a bridge over the Narotsch, to enable us to go in a direct line to Vileika. But the work was hardly finished when the orders were changed, and the majority of the troops marched towards Zachkevitschi, where they remained that night.

The road from Zachkevitschi to Vileika is very sandy, leading through woods. A little before we arrived here, we crossed the Wilia over a floating bridge. The river is neither very broad nor very deep there, but its banks are very steep, particularly the one opposite Vileika. General Colbert, who commanded the advanced-guard, took some magazines which had been abandoned, a short time only having elapsed since the enemy had quitted that position. The Viceroy redoubled his vigilance, for fear of being surprised, and took particular care in choosing the place where his troops were to encamp.

Whilst we thus marched towards Vileika, the King of Naples, assisted by the second and third

corps, drove the first western army from one position to another behind the Dwina, and at last obliged them to withdraw into the intrenchments at Drissa. On our right Prince Eckmuhl continued the pursuit of Prince Bagration, and arrived without fighting as far as Borisow, on the Berezina. On the extreme of our left, the Marshal Duke of Tarentum likewise obtained important advantages, and took entire possession of Samogitia.

The conduct of the enemy in thus continually flying before us, was accounted for in many different ways. Some thought it was the effect of their weakness, others believed it to be the result of a well-digested plan. "What is become of those Russians," they asked, "who, for more than fifty years, have been the terror of Europe, and the conquerors of Asia? The power of Russia seems but to be fictitious, invented by hireling writers, and deceitful travellers. It existed but in imagination, and the phantom vanished as soon as we attacked it." Those, however, whom experience had taught to wait the result of time, said, that it was unwise to despise an enemy whom we had not yet beaten; that his flight was calculated to diminish our force, and to deprive us of the means of recruiting it, by drawing us too far from our own country. "The Russians,"

added those sensible men, “ derive their most powerful succours from their climate. Why should they seek to fight us when they know that the winter will oblige us to abandon all our conquests ?”

At last the Russians themselves explained the motives of their retreat, by the following proclamation, distributed on the borders of the Dwina :

“ FRENCH SOLDIERS !

“ You are forced to march to a new war. You  
“ are told that it is because the Russians do not  
“ render justice to your valour ; but know, com-  
“ rades, you will see in the field of battle how they  
“ appreciate it. Consider, that one army will fol-  
“ low another, if requisite, and that you are four  
“ hundred leagues from any reinforcements. Do  
“ not allow yourselves to be deceived by our first  
“ movements. You ought to know the Russians  
“ too well to suppose that they will fly before you.  
“ As soon as we begin the combat, you will find it  
“ difficult to retreat. We advise you, as fellow-  
“ warriors, to return en masse to your own coun-  
“ try. Do not believe the perfidious suggestion  
“ that you are fighting for peace : you are employed  
“ to gratify the insatiable ambition of a sovereign  
“ who does not wish for peace : he might have ob-

"tained it long ago ; he trifles with the blood of  
"his brave subjects. Return to your own coun-  
"try, or if you wish to seek an asylum in Russia,  
"you will there soon forget the very words of con-  
"scriptions, levies, *bans*, and *arrière-bans*, and  
"that military tyranny which does not allow you  
"for one minute to shake off the oppressive yoke."

This proclamation contained such palpable truth, that its publication astonished every one. Some, however, considered it as a counterfeit production, written with a view to give occasion to that silly *answer of a French grenadier*, which would certainly have become an object of pleasantry to the army, and of contempt to foreigners, if it had not been long acknowledged that the greatest virtue of a soldier consists in an implicit obedience to his chiefs : and that every Frenchman, faithful to his banners, made it a point of honour to fight openly all those who should tell him he was an enemy to his country.

In continuing the movement we got to Kostenevitschi, a wretched little village, where, except the post-house and vicarage, there were only a few miserable barns, covered with straw. The royal guard was encamped near the village, but the Viceroy had fixed the general quarters two leagues further on. The following day, July 17th, after a march of five leagues, through a pretty

good road, we arrived at the borough of Dolghinow, the population of which consisted again almost entirely of Jews, a circumstance by which we procured the pleasure of a few bottles of brandy. Our continued marches, and a deprivation of that liquor, induce me to mention a thing which seems so insignificant in itself; but, from the importance which we attached to it, one may judge of the extent of our wants, and of the difficulty of satisfying them.

We went afterwards to Dokzice, a distance of about seven leagues from the point where we then were. That borough, the inhabitants of which were likewise Jews, contained a very pretty place, near which there stood a church and a paltry wooden castle. The extremities of the town are situated on two eminences, between which runs a little marshy rivulet. On the day when we rested in that town, we perceived a thick smoke arising behind the castle, in which the Prince lodged. The flames spread soon on all sides, and devoured in an instant several neighbouring houses ; but the army offering quick and efficacious help, all fears soon vanished with the fire itself.

Near Smorghoni we had left the road to Minsk and the Nieper, and turned to the left, in order to approach the Dwina, and to follow the move-

ments of the centre of the great army, which went in that direction. General Sebastiani, who commanded the advanced-guard, assisted by the corps of the Duke of Reggio, chased the cossacks as far as Drouia; but the enemy having been informed that our cavalry was badly guarded, they shut themselves up in their trenches at Drissa, and caused a bridge to be erected, over which five thousand infantry and as many cavalry passed, commanded by General Koulniew. General Saintgeniez, who was taken by surprise, was made a prisoner in that engagement, and the rest of the brigade did not escape till after they had experienced considerable losses.

When we approached Berezina, where we were to sleep that night, the road leading constantly downwards, brought us imperceptibly near the river of the same name, which runs through one of the most marshy plains in Europe. On our arrival at the borough we became still more convinced of it, a single line of houses being extended through the most miry ground. Beyond that place the road leads over a kind of turf, over which they had thrown a number of branches of the fir-tree, to obstruct the way, leaving small openings only, to facilitate the discharge of the waters.

From Berezina, as far as Oula, the ground

continued very damp. The distance from these rivers to each other, is about twenty or twenty-five leagues, running all that way through marshes and immense forests. Gloubokoe was our first, and Kamen our second station. The first of these boroughs is remarkable for a beautiful castle of wood, and the latter for a kind of mountain placed in the middle of its circumference, which overlooks the plain. At Bot-scheikovo we approached the borders of the Oula (July 23d). This river is united to the Berezina by the canal Lepel, which is much used for commercial intercourse, being the more pleasant and useful, as it gives a communication between the Nieper and the Dwina. In thus uniting the Baltic and the Mediterranean, it enlivens the interior of Lithuania, in providing her with productions of the most opposite climes. This river runs in a bed, the shore of which is much elevated. On the left side beyond the bridge appears a magnificent castle, which we thought the handsomest of all those we had seen since our arrival in Poland.

But we could not help being astonished that we were allowed to proceed so rapidly in our march without any molestation ; we advanced daily without any impediment, and with almost as much security as if we were travelling in

Bavaria or Saxony. The tranquillity in which our adversaries allowed us to continue, was incomprehensible to us, and every one formed the most opposite, and frequently the most erroneous, conjectures on this subject. At Kamen, however, we learnt from several officers who had been sent to Ouchatsch, where the Emperor was, that the enemy, having quitted their trenches at Drissa, had returned to the Dwina towards Polotsk and Witepsk, for fear of being cut off by our corps, which had taken a direction towards the latter town. The orders, too, which they brought us, made us believe that we should immediately meet with some resistance. These conjectures were soon changed into certainty, hearing from those who had made inquiries at the mouth of the Oula, and on the road to Bezenkovitschi, that the cossacks intended to fall on our flanks. The Viceroy immediately ordered the advanced-guard, and the light cavalry, to proceed to Bezenkovitschi, where the Russians were assembled in considerable force, under General Ostermann (July 23d). H. H. soon afterwards mounted his horse, accompanied by his aid-de-camps, and followed the advanced-guard. When he arrived at Bezenscovitschi they retreated, and crossed the Dwina with cavalry, and some pieces of artillery. Whilst we were

in the borough, the Russian sharp-shooters, who were hidden in the houses of the village, on the opposite side of the river, kept an incessant fire upon us. Colonel Lacroix, who was walking in the principal street which led to the river, received a shot which broke his thigh. This accident produced an affliction sensation in the whole army ; every one pitied this worthy officer, because they were deprived of his valuable services, by a fatality which frequently deprives the most deserving of all power to distinguish themselves. After that affair, the Viceroy returned, for the night, to the castle at Botscheïkovo. In the evening he had a long conference with General Dessoles, the chief of his staff, which made us presume that we should march in the night ; but the order was not given till the following morning.

July 24th. After five hours' marching, and crossing a small river, called Svetscha, our troops arrived at Bezenkovitschi. This little town was already filled with troops, particularly with the two divisions of cavalry under Generals Brûyères and Saint Germain, who had come by the way of Oula. This great mass of troops marching towards Witepsk, did not much frighten the enemy, who was separated from us by the Dwina. His cavalry was proudly manœuvring, and firing

on our men, who approached to fetch the ferry-boat, which had been taken to the opposite shore.

The Viceroy, however, having resolved to cross the Dwina from this point, caused a battery of two pieces of cannon to be erected, to protect the sappers who were ordered to construct the bridge, and the marines of the royal guard, who, plunging themselves into the water, went to fetch the ferry. These guns, and a few sharp-shooters placed on the shore, intimidated the Russians so much, that they quitted the houses where they had hidden themselves, and allowed us quietly to take back the boat, and to finish the bridge which the engineers were erecting.

In the mean time, a division of Bavarian cavalry, under General Preyssing, having found a ford about two hundred steps below the bridge, effected their passage. Scarcely was the river crossed, when the squadrons ranged themselves for battle, being assisted by some companies of light troops, which had been sent over in the ferry. The Bavarian squadrons began now to pursue the enemy, who fled at their approach, setting fire to every thing which was left behind. We admired, particularly on that occasion, the manner in which the Bavarians marched. The quickness of their evolutions, and the prudence of their out-guards, may

be quoted as models, to those who may have similar military charges.

Whilst we were contemplating these manœuvres, we heard a report, that the Emperor was approaching. The courier who had brought the news was immediately followed by another, who confirmed it. Soon afterwards arrived the saddle-horses, the officers of ordnance, and the generals of the guard ; in short the town, already full of troops, became now quite crowded. In the midst of all this tumult Napoleon appeared. He proceeded immediately towards that part of the river where they were erecting the bridge. He blamed, in a dry and sarcastic manner, the construction of it, which was really very defective ; but, having determined to go to the other side of the river, he went over the bridge, mounted his horse, and joined the Bavarians, who had halted in the plain. He made them march about two leagues from Bezenkovitschi, and accompanied them himself. Napoleon made this manœuvre, probably with the view of attracting the enemy's attention in this direction, that he might meet with fewer impediments when he should attack Witepsk, on the opposite shore ; or perhaps he did it to annoy the Russian army in their march, when they endeavoured to regain the Dwina, after they had left the trenches at Drissa.

It is impossible to imagine the bustle at Bezenkovitschi, which increased more and more when the staff arrived there. In the night the confusion became still greater. The number of troops which burst in from all parts, and the quickness with which they were ordered to proceed, left no doubt that we should soon have a battle. The cavalry, commanded by the King of Naples, formed the vanguard; the fourth corps followed immediately to assist them.

July 25th. The order was given to march to Ostrowno, and the staff were on the point of proceeding to it, when we heard a strong cannonade. At this moment an aid-de-camp of General Delzons arrived in great haste to inform the Viceroy that the enemy had been met with near Ostrowno, where an obstinate combat had just commenced. The aid-de-camp had scarcely finished the report of his mission to the Prince, when the noise of cannon seemed to increase. His Highness then gave orders to stop the baggage of his quarter-general, and accompanied only by his staff, he hastened to Ostrowno, where he joined the King of Naples; having with him the divisions of cavalry of Bruyères, and Saint-Germain, supported by the thirteenth division of infantry. But when they arrived at Soritza, the affair had already been successfully decided. Twenty pieces of cannon, which we

had taken, and the vast numbers of dead, left on the field of battle, proved, both the resistance of the conquered, and the valour of the seventh and eighth hussars, who had, on that occasion, covered themselves with glory.

It was three o'clock in the morning (July 26th), when the Viceroy went to Ostrowno, to join the King of Naples. The fourth corps were encamped near him, and the cavalry, placed in the van, watched the manœuvres of the enemy. At six o'clock, H. M. and the Prince, accompanied by their respective staffs, marched towards the van-posts, and going through the ground where the combat had taken place the night before, they heard the report that Ostermann's corps, two divisions strong, was in position. The Prince then gave immediate orders to the thirteenth and fourteenth divisions, to assist the cavalry, commanded by the King of Naples. The hussars, sent out to reconnoitre, having met with impediments at the entrance of a forest, came to tell us that the enemy seemed anxious to shut it up. We heard on all sides the fire of the sharp-shooters; and the cannon of the Russians, placed on the road, destroyed our columns, which had advanced. General Danthouard ordered our pieces to be brought forward without delay, and it was in this exchange of balls, Captain Ferrari, of the eighth

hussars, formerly aid-de-camp to Prince Neuchatel, had his leg shot off. Meanwhile, the King of Naples, flying to all parts where his presence might be useful, ordered an attack to be made from our left side, in order to chase the cavalry which occupied the extremity of a wood. Notwithstanding this movement was well-planned, it had not the desired effect. The detachment of hussars, charged with the execution of it, being too weak, was obliged, though without any loss, to retire from the number of squadrons who approached to the combat.

Whilst we were manœuvring on our left side, the Russians tried to force our right ; the Vice-roy, perceiving it, caused the thirteenth division to advance towards that point, and mounting their horses on the road, they stopped the progress of the enemy. The artillery of our regiments, being well placed on some eminences, made us feel certain that our line could not be forced.

Our right side seemed well guarded, when a sudden attack, and dreadful screamings were heard, both on the left side, and in the centre. The enemy, coming up with force, had vigorously pushed back our sharp-shooters, placed in the forest, which obliged the artillery to retire precipitately ; whilst the Russian cavalry, taking advantage of a small plain, which was lying on

our left, charged violently upon the Croats, and the 84th regiment. Happily, however, the King of Naples came up in time to stop their progress. Two battalions of the 106th, kept in reserve, assisted the Croats; while General Dantouard, in whom talents and bravery were united in the highest degree, seconded by the Commander Demay and Captain Bonardelle, reanimated the spirits of the artillery, and, by well-chosen dispositions placed them in those posts which they had quitted but for an instant.

The affairs of the left side and of the centre being re-established, the King of Naples and Prince Eugene went to the right wing, and put it in motion. The enemy, laying in ambuscade before a forest, opposed the most energetic resistance to the 92d regiment, which, notwithstanding its being placed on an advantageous eminence, remained inactive. The Viceroy, wishing to stimulate them, despatched the adjutant-commander, Forestier; who at length succeeded in making them advance. Their march, however, appeared too slow to the valorous and impatient Duke Abrantes. This intrepid General, who had been used to be commander-in-chief, quitted the Viceroy, and went to encourage the regiment, on which all eyes were fixed. His presence, or rather his example, electrified every one; and the brave

92d, headed by General Roussel, marched instantly to the charge, overthrowing every thing that opposed them, penetrating at last into the forest, where the enemy had strongly intrenched himself.

On turning to the extremity of our right, we perceived a Russian column, which had been sent to divert us, beating a retreat. The King of Naples, with that animation peculiar to great minds, ordered the cavalry to run up to that column, and to make them lay down their arms. The difficulties of the ground made the cavalry hesitate for a moment, but the King, who, from the quickness of his own conceptions, wished that the execution might be as prompt as the thought itself, drawing his sword from the scabbard, called out, with great vivacity, "*Let the bravest follow me.*" This heroism filled us all with admiration ; every one wished to second him ; but deep hollow ways, and large thickets, prevented our squadrons from following him, which gave the enemy time to escape, and to rejoin the corps from which it had been detached.

The success of the combat was certain ; still we could not yet venture to cross the great forest before us, at the end of which were the hills of Witepsk, where all the forces of the enemy were encamped. Just when we were delibera-

ting on the means of effecting that important passage, we heard a great bustle behind us. No body could guess the cause, and uneasiness was added to our curiosity; but when we perceived Napoleon in the middle of a brilliant suite, all our fears vanished; and the enthusiasm which his presence always excited, made us hope that he would add to the glory of that eventful day. The King of Naples and the Prince went to meet him, imparted to him what had happened, and the measures which they had taken. But Napoleon, desirous to become more intimately acquainted with every circumstance, proceeded to the most advanced posts of our line, viewing from an eminence, the enemy's positions and the nature of the ground. His eye penetrating into the Russian camp, he guessed their plans, and immediately ordered new dispositions, which being executed with order and rapidity, the army was soon in the middle of the forest. We followed at a quick trot, just coming up to the hills of Witepsk at the close of the day.

The thirteenth division, which co-operated at this manœuvre, experienced much resistance from the enemy in crossing the woods. He retired but gradually; and his sharp-shooters made us pay dearly for the ground which we had gained. It was in one of these unforeseen and

unfortunate rencontres, that a Russian dragoon, coming up to general Roussel, fired a pistol at him and killed him on the spot. As the Russians seldom place dragoons amongt sharp-shooters, it occasioned the report that General Roussel had been killed by one of ours; but after some time, we were convinced that we had not to reproach ourselves with the death of that brave General, who was worthy of our regret, both for his military qualities, and his private virtues.

Broussier's division (fourteenth) followed the great road, but arrived too late at its position, which had been chosen between the road and the Dwina. The fifteenth division, and the Italian guard, forming the rest of the infantry of the fourth corps, were left in reserve, a little behind the fourteenth.

After the army had taken their positions, Napoleon established his general quarters in the village Koukoviatschi; the King of Naples and Prince Eugene were encamped in an uncomfortable little castle, near the village Dobrijka, surrounded by the corps under their command.

On the following morning, at the dawn of day (July 27th), our troops marched towards Witespk. When the Russians retired from that town, they fired some cannon, which, however,

did us little injury. They afterwards took a position near the town, which overlooked all the different roads leading to it. From the hill where we were placed, we could easily observe the lines of the enemy, and particularly his numerous cavalry, all arranged in battle at the extremity of the plain.

The division Broussier, being, that day, the vanguard, crossed the river over a miserable bridge, which separated us from the plain, and put themselves in battle-array, opposite the place which was occupied by the Russians. The sixteenth regiment of chasseurs, who had just arrived on the plain, were vigorously attacked by several squadrons of the cossack-guard, and that regiment would have experienced a total defeat, if it had not been on the left side assisted by the light troops of the ninth regiment, commanded by Captains Guyard and Savary. On this occasion, these brave men attracted the attention of the whole army, who encamped on eminences, resembling an amphitheatre, and witnessing their exploits, gave them the applause justly due to their valour.

The sixteenth chasseurs, retiring upon the fourteenth division, were protected by the 53d regiment, commanded by Colonel Grosbon. That division forming a square, presented to the

enemy an impenetrable front, against which all efforts to subvert it, had proved ineffectual. This circumstance threw a little confusion into our ranks ; but Napoleon being at hand, it could not continue. Placed on an eminence, from which he could see all manœuvres, he calmly ordered every thing which he thought necessary to obtain a victory. He ordered a regiment of cavalry to retire, in order to facilitate the passage of the bridge to the thirteenth division. This retrograde movement spread terror amongst our train, which consisted of a number of workmen, sutlers or victuallers, people who are easily alarmed ; and who, always afraid of losing their booty, are rather prejudicial than useful to armies.

The thirteenth division having advanced, filed to the right, the Viceroy marched at their head, and conducted them behind the fourteenth division, on the eminence which overlooked the place where the enemy were encamped.

These heights, not being guarded, we advanced without difficulty, and took our position on the summit, opposite the Russian camp ; separated only by the river Loutchesa, the steep shores of which made the way so hollow, that it was impossible to come to a general action. However, we pretended to begin it, by detach-

ing some light troops, who succeeded in passing over the hollow way, and established themselves in a little wood. But not being assisted, they proceeded no further, but returned to their corps, as soon as the fire of the batteries had ceased, and the divisions were no longer under arms.

This suspension, when the armies were in sight of each other, astonished every one, and we heard from all parts, "Where is the Emperor? What are his intentions?"

During these discussions we were joined by the first corps, and the Imperial guard. Some thought that Napoleon waited merely for the junction of all his forces, before he begun a serious attack; others, on the contrary, affirmed that Marshal Ney, and the cavalry of General Montbrun, advancing from the other shore of the Dwina, would change the position at Witepsk, and thus cut off the retreat of the Russians. But this manœuvre was, no doubt, impracticable, not having been executed.

On that night the troops continued under arms, on the spots where they had taken their position, each relating the honourable deeds by which his corps had been distinguished: From these accounts, it appeared certain, that the combat, though glorious, had not been very bloody. But amongst the small number of dead, was

the Colonel of the engineers, Liedot, a man worthy of the corps to which he belonged. During the expedition to Egypt, he distinguished himself by his courage; and, at the construction of the fortifications in Italy, he proved that the military art is no obstacle to the developement of the most profound conceptions.

The confidence with which the Russians remained in their positions, and the junction of a great part of our troops at the same point, induced us to believe that a general action would take place the following day. What was our astonishment, therefore, when we perceived at the dawn of day (July 28th), that the enemy had effected his retreat. Our whole army went immediately in pursuit, except the imperial guard, which went to Witepsk, where the Emperor seemed inclined to remain.

This town, the chief residence of the government of that name, situated between hills and the shores of the Dwina, contained twenty thousand inhabitants, and presented, from its position, the most delightful aspect. Poland and Lithuania had, during more than two months, and in the space of more than three hundred leagues, presented nothing to us but deserted villages, and a pillaged country. Destruction seemed to precede our steps, and in every direction the po-

pulation was seen flying at our approach, leaving their homes to hordes of cossacks, who destroyed every thing which they could not carry away. Having long experienced the most painful deprivations, we looked with longing eyes towards those neat and elegant houses where quiet and abundance seemed to dwell. But the enjoyment of repose which we had anticipated, was again denied us, and we were obliged to renew our pursuit of the Russians, leaving on our left this town, the object of our wishes and of our dearest hopes.

As we followed the movement of the vanguard, we were astonished in perceiving the perfect order with which Count Barclay de Tolly had evacuated his position. We wandered about in all directions over an immense plain, without being able to perceive a trace of his retreat. Neither a waggon, a dead horse, nor even a single vehicle, indicated the road which the enemy had taken. Whilst we remained in this uncertainty, which was perhaps without an example of the kind, Colonel Kliski, who went to the field to look out for a peasant, found a Russian soldier sleeping under a bush. This meeting seemed a very lucky hit to us, and the Viceroy profiting by it, questioned the prisoner, who gave us some infor-

mation as to the route which the column had taken, to which he belonged.

The Prince, however, wishing to be more convinced, advanced, but not having met with any thing worthy of our attention, we returned hastily the same way towards the high road, which, from Witepsk, approaches the Dwina. The whole road was covered with cavalry. The King of Naples soon joined the Viceroy, and, after some consultation together, they ordered the movements of their respective corps. The heat was excessive. Clouds of dust, occasioned by the horses, made that march intolerable. We were obliged to stop, and we made a halt at a church, built of wood, where the King of Naples and the Prince had a long conversation together.

The cavalry had filed in pursuit of the Russian army, and we soon heard that they had come up with them ; in consequence of which, all the troops continued their march, and overtook the enemy. The cossacks, who formed the advanced-guard, drew back on the advance of our artillery, and fired some cannons, whenever they met with a favourable opportunity. They continued manœuvring till they were beyond Aghaponovchtchina, where our corps and the cavalry were stationed. Near this village, on the left side, was a shabby

castle of wood, on an eminence where the Emperor lodged, who, being informed that we had overtaken the Russians, immediately left Witepsk to join us.

There never was a bivouac which presented a more military appearance than ours at Aghapovnovchtchina. Napoleon, the King of Naples, and the Prince, were in one tent ; the generals, placed in huts which their soldiers had constructed, were encamped with their officers by the side of a brook, the miry water of which was preserved with great care. During the three days that we had been on the field of battle, water and roots had constituted our only nourishment. Our divisions were encamped on eminences round the castle. The enemy could see our fires, the brilliant light of which dissipated the darkness of night.

Early the following morning (July 29th) we went in search of the Russians ; the Emperor, however, returned to Witepsk, where he intended to reside a sufficient time to execute his plans relative to Lithuania. When the King of Naples arrived where the roads of Janowitchi and Sourai meet, he separated from us, taking with him the whole cavalry, and the fourteenth division. The Viceroy, pursuing his way, marched

towards the Dwina, followed by the thirteenth and fifteenth divisions, the royal guard, and the brigade of light cavalry, commanded by General Villasa.

We were just going to enter Sourai when we were informed by some chasseurs that an enemy's convoy, feebly escorted, wanted to cross the river to get on the road to Weliki-luki. The Vice-roy ordered his aid-de-camp, Deseve, to follow the chasseurs immediately, and to take the convoy. This order was fully executed ; for, after two hours, the aid-de-camp returned with the news that the convoy was ours.

The borough Sourai, although entirely built of wood, was one of the best which we had met with. Its population, consisting chiefly of Jews, was considerable ; their industry offered us some comforts of which we stood in great need. The magazines were tolerably filled, which was a happy circumstance, for every thing seemed to indicate that we should make some stay in this little town.

Sourai, without being a military position, was a very important place. It is situated at the mouth of the Casplia and the Dwina, at which point the high roads to Petersburgh and Moscow meet, forming a junction which closed up the

road to Witepsk. During our stay there we saw several geographical engineers taking plans of the river, and the surrounding scenery.

The thirteenth division, which had followed us, was encamped about a league behind Sourai ; a part of the fifteenth, and the foot-guard, were quartered in the town. The horse-guard, commanded by General Triaire, went to the other side of the Dwina, and detached a strong vanguard on the road to Weliki-luki. During that march, Adjutant Boutarel, belonging to the palace, saw that the road to Ousviat formed a continued defile across the woods ; but in the immediate vicinity of that small town, the ground was quite different, and the provisions which the dragoons brought from that expedition, proved that this place could provide abundant resources for cantonments.

On our arrival at Sourai, the Viceroy being informed that a new Russian convoy, with a strong escort, had taken its direction towards Veliz, ordered Baron Banco, colonel of the second regiment of Italian chasseurs, to take two hundred chosen men, and proceed immediately in pursuit. After nine hours' march, this detachment arrived at Veilz, just as the convoy were coming from the town, to cross the bridge over the Dwina. The chasseurs immediately

charged the escort ; five times, however, they were repulsed, by the infantry, and by many detachments of cavalry, much stronger than their own. But the bravery of the Italians triumphed at last over the obstinate resistance of the enemy ; they succeeded in taking all their baggage, and obliged five hundred Russians to lay down their arms. This victory cost us some wounded men ; amongst these were six officers, one of whom died of his wounds.

Whilst Napoleon was at Witepsk, endeavouring to organize Lithuania, and the centre of the army was at rest between the Nieper and the Dwina, we learnt that Prince Eckmuhl had been attacked at Mohilow. Bagration, profiting by the leisure, which the combat at Borisow, had allowed him, crossed the Berezina at Bobruisk, and marched towards Novoi-Bickow. On the 23d July, three hundred cossacks attacked us, at the dawn of day, taking about a hundred prisoners from the third chasseurs, amongst whom, was the colonel. An alarm was spread in our camp, a general march commenced, and our soldiers began the attack. The Russian General, Sicverse, with two chosen divisions, directed all the attacks. From eight in the morning, until five in the evening, the firing was kept up on the skirts of the forest, and on

the bridge, which the Russians intended to force. At five o'clock, Prince Eckmuhl advanced at the head of three of the choicest battalions, defeated the Russians, took their position, and pursued them about a league. The loss must have been equal on both sides, but Prince Bagration, satisfied with the information which he had received, retired on Bickow, and crossed the Nieper to proceed to Smolensko, where the two Russian armies were to form a junction.

General Kamenski, with two divisions, endeavoured to join Prince Bagration; but not being able to effect it, he returned to Wolhynia, and united himself to the ninth and fifteenth divisions, formed by Count Marckoff, and then commanded by General Tormasow. These four divisions, forming a considerable corps, marched towards Kobrin, to join the seventh corps. They surrounded the Saxon General Klengel, who had only two regiments of infantry, and two squadrons. Obliged to yield to superior force, he did not submit till after an obstinate combat; for he expected to be relieved by General Regnier, who, notwithstanding all the haste he made, did not arrive till two hours after the capitulation.

Although we sustained those losses on our right side, on the extremity of our left they were

more fortunate. The Duke of Tarentum, commanding the Prussian corps, sent vans out on the road to Riga, and by the favourable dispositions of Generals Grawert and Kleist, gained great advantages over the Russians. A few days afterwards, General Ricard took Dunabourg, which the enemy had abandoned, after having made great preparations for its defence. But the most glorious action of our arms, was that performed by the second corps. The Duke of Reggio, having sent out vanguards towards Sebei, met Prince Wittgenstein, who attacked him, having been previously reinforced by the corps of Prince Repnin. The combat begun near the castle Jakoubovo. The division Legrand, sustained a severe attack till ten in the evening, and by the valour of the brave light troops of the 26th, and the 56th of the line, the Russians sustained considerable loss, notwithstanding which, they ventured on the following day, to try the passage of the Dwina. The Duke of Reggio desired General Castex not to oppose them. The enemy fell in the snare, and on the 1st of August, taking his direction towards Drissa, he put himself in battle-array before the second corps. Fifteen thousand men, forming half of Wittgenstein's army, had crossed the river, when a masked battery of forty

pieces of cannon, were directed towards them, and kept up a constant fire for half an hour. The division Legrand took part in this action, and when it began to turn in our favour, the division Verdier arrived with fixed bayonets. The Russians were driven into the river, and lost three thousand men, and fourteen pieces of cannon. In pursuing the remnant of them on the road to Sebei, we found two thousand dead, amongst whom was General Koulnew, a very distinguished officer of the light troops.

At that time, a rumour was spread, that the Emperor Alexander had been assassinated at Veli-ki-luki, by his courtiers, in consequence of the Emperor having demanded a peace from us. It was asserted, that Napoleon announced this news at one of his audiences at Witepsk. We afterwards ascertained, that this deceitful report had been circulated, to counteract the effect of the energetic proclamation which the Emperor Alexander had issued to the Russian nation, in which that monarch ordered all the people of his powerful empire to arm themselves against the perfidious enemy ; who, after having violated the territory of their country, had advanced towards their ancient capital in order to destroy it, and to annihilate the glory of its illustrious founders. But all these shameful falsehoods failed of success, and

did not even reach a population, who, flying at the approach of the French army, could neither resent that mean artifice, nor be corrupted by flattering promises; the object of which was, to excite discord, to raise the people against the nobility, and to deaden in their hearts, the attachment and faithfulness which was due to their sovereign.

## BOOK III.

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### SMOLENSKO.

AFTER the battle of Veliz, the Viceroy feeling the necessity of reinforcing the detachment of chasseurs that had been left there, sent to this point the whole brigade of General Villata with one battalion of Dalmatians. Veliz, situated at the junction of two principal roads, the one leading from Petersburg, the other from Smolensko, was exposed to the frequent excursions of the cossacks ; it was also the extreme point to which the French army had as yet penetrated. The population of this small town, consisting principally of Jews, procured for us wherewithal to satisfy the exigencies of life ; the environs consisted but of miserable hovels. While the soldiers gave themselves up to the indulgencies which such circumstances could procure them, Colonel Banco, who understood perfectly the Russian language, was informed by spies, that it was the intention of the enemy to

attack the brigade. On receiving this intelligence, General Villata prepared in secret, every thing necessary to repel the enemy, at the same time affecting publicly to think himself in perfect security; in this posture, the cossacks made their appearance at daybreak before the town, thinking to surprise it; but the Dalmatians, who were under arms, left their ambuscade, and firing a volley on the cossacks, several of them fell. The rest, frightened by such a reception, took to flight, and gave up the project of surprising a town so bravely defended. The soldiers, on this occasion, shewed themselves worthy of the rewards that had been bestowed on them on a former occasion.

The fourth corps, after resting ten days in the town of Sourai, marched on the 9th of August towards Janowitschi, in order to join the fourteenth division. On the evening before this movement took place, the chief of the squadron Labedoyère, was sent to the King of Naples in quality of aid-de-camp to Prince Eugene. At his return from the mission, on which he had been sent, he confirmed the news of a desperate engagement having taken place between the enemy and our troops, under General Sebastiani, near Inkovo, and the unfortunate circumstances of our defeat; for, according to the depositions of all

the officers, it was universally believed that our cavalry had suffered considerably, and that, besides a few pieces of cannon, we had lost a fine light company of the 24th infantry. And it was even said, that had it not been for the bravery of our lancers, our losses would have been infinitely greater. On this occasion, some blamed General Sebastiani; but the greater part laid all the fault on General Montbrun, who, disregarding the information that was given him, and urged on by his natural bravery, thought fit to hazard a battle, although convinced of the superior force of the enemy.

The Viceroy having rested on the 10th of August at Janowitschi, the pioneers of the fourth corps, under the directions of General Poitevin, restored the bridge thrown over the little river that passes through the town. This bridge was in so bad a condition, that it was thought unsafe for carriages and horses to go over it; consequently they were forced to pass the river at a ford, of which the bottom was very muddy, and the banks very steep.

On our march towards Liozna, we crossed a plain slightly interspersed with little hillocks, and afterwards passed several small woods, and a river, or rather a rivulet, that runs near a hamlet situated about half-way to the castle of

Velechkovitschi, where the army arrived on the 11th of August, and the soldiers encamped on the heights that surround the castle. The following day, as far as Liozna, the roads were excessively bad ; and led through marshy grounds, which presented nothing but obstacles to our convoys, and particularly to our artillery ; it is true, that two days before it had rained abundantly. I ought to remark here, that these violent storms were the only ones that we experienced ; for, during the rest of the campaign, we were very little incommoded by rain.

Near Liozna, a large and dirty village, we crossed, on the 12th of August, a wretched bridge thrown over a small, deep, and winding river, which separates the town from the castle, at the distance of three quarters of a mile towards the west, where was lodged Prince Eugene. But, the communication being established by means of a bridge, our troops availed themselves of the camp that had been formed by the corps under the orders of the Duke of Elchingen, and which was situated near this bridge, between the town and the castle.

On our march to Liouvavitschi, several obstacles prevented us from taking the direct and shortest road ; and even the one we chose was not exempt from difficulties ; for we saw our-

selves forced to pass several defiles, over swampy fields, and cross roads cut though the middle of forests. We arrived at last at Liouvavitschi, of which the approaches were as bad and muddy as the interior of Liozna.

This inconsiderable town consisted of houses constructed principally of wood ; to arrive there, we crossed over a ruinous bridge, and the road was so exceedingly bad, that it was with the utmost difficulty the horses could clear them. This extreme humidity is the result of the position of Liouvavitschi ; several rivulets that surround the town, form great masses of water, which make the place constantly damp.

As we arrived in Liouvavitschi, we saw all the cavalry of the King of Naples coming from the environs of Roudnia and Inkovo ; but, instead of following the road to Razasna, it took to the left, in order to gain a bridge higher up than that over which it was our intention to pass the Nieper.

As to our divisions, the thirteenth and fourteenth encamped beyond the town ; the fifteenth remained on the heights which were to the left, with the cavalry of the Italian guard, while the infantry of this same guard, being stationed at the general quarters, were encamped generally in the suburbs near the residence occupied by the Viceroy,

The reunion of the whole army on the borders of the Nieper, announced the intention of crossing this river, and attacking Smolensko by the left bank, in order to gain possession of the town, the fortified part of which happened to be on this bank. The order was in fact to go to Razasna, where bridges had been thrown across to facilitate the passage.

Before our arrival at this river, we passed over an almost desert country; no village was to be seen on the road, and but seldom were any houses to be met with where it was possible to stop; on the road was a foundery, where we were forced to leave a part of our baggage. After many difficulties, we arrived at last at the Nieper, which is called also the Borysthene, by the Greeks; this remembrance inspired our breasts with grand and sublime ideas. But the illusion was soon destroyed, when we saw a shallow, narrow, and insignificant stream. This river is so narrow, and its banks so steep, that it is not seen till very near it; and, from its banks being so steep, its passage is consequently difficult.

Near Razasna, all the different corps of the grand army, some coming from Orcha, and the others from Babinovitschi, formed their junction.

This immense reunion of men on the same point, while it augmented our difficulties, redoubled the confusion and disorder that reigned on the principal roads. Strayed soldiers sought in vain their regiments ; others, bearers of important despatches, could not fulfil their mission, so much were the roads encumbered : hence arose on the bridges and in the défiles a dreadful tumult, not to be described.

The fourth corps having arrived on the 15th, of August, at a small town called Liadouï (a place to be remarked, as being the last where we found any Jews), crossed, very near it, a small river, a little above which, is a large elevated plain, which entirely commands the town ; we continued our march as far as Siniaki, a miserable hamlet, consisting only of a few houses, and situated at two hundred yards from the road-side. The Viceroy, intending to encamp in this place, gave orders for the troops to halt. During this time, the other divisions of the grand army marched on Smolensko, and the cannonading which we heard made us presume that the town was vigorously attacked.

The next day, being the 16th of August, we remained in the same position, and, during the whole of the day, troops in considerable numbers passed us, pushing forwards. Towards six

o'clock in the evening, we found it necessary to quit Siniaki, and marched during three hours before we could reach Krasnoe, a small town, where are to be found some few houses built of stone, and where the Viceroy established his corresponding posts ; but we did not stop, and, continuing our march, we crossed a small river near Katova : above was a hill, on the top of which was a plain. The Prince pitched his tent under a large row of trees, surrounded by his division. At daybreak of the 17th, we continued our route, and passed the night as before, three miles beyond the post of Korouitnïa, in a wood of birch-trees, situated near a lake. Our camp offered a most picturesque appearance. The Viceroy having caused his tent to be pitched in the middle of the wood, the officers slept in their carriages, and those who had none, cut down trees to construct themselves huts, whilst their comrades lighted fires to cook the meat. As for the soldiers, some went marauding, others employed themselves washing their linen on the borders of the river, while the rest, after a long march, amused themselves in making war against the few ducks and geese that had escaped the voracity of the cossacks.

It was here we learnt that Smolensko, after a long-contested battle, had been set fire to by

the Russians, and abandoned to their conquerors. This transaction appeared to presage nothing good for us, but served to prove to us to what extremities a people could go, that were determined not to bow to a foreign yoke. The next day we approached near to this unhappy town; but the Viceroy ordered the halt in a wood, near the castle of Novoidwor, about three miles from the town, on this side of it, and went in person to join the Emperor.

I was encamped with the whole of the fourth corps, in a thick forest, when one of my comrades, coming from Smolensko, detailed to me, in the following words, the circumstances of the battle, at which he was present.

" The position that we had occupied until  
" the 13th of this month, made the enemy suppose  
" that we should attack Smolensko by the  
" right bank of the Borysthene; but the Emperor,  
" by a prompt and unexpected manœuvre, caused  
" the whole of the army to pass on the opposite bank. The same day the King of Naples,  
" who still commanded the advanced-guard, and  
" supported by the Duke of Elchingen, arrived  
" at Krasnoë, and, as you know already," said  
the officer to me, "gave battle to the twenty-  
" fifth Russian division, amounting to five thousand infantry, and two thousand cavalry. In this

“ gallant affair, we took several pieces of canon, and some prisoners. After these successes, Napoleon, as early as the 16th in the morning, appeared before Smolensko. This town is surrounded by an ancient wall, with loop-holes, of four thousand toises in circumference, ten feet thick, twenty-five high, and, at certain distances, flanked with enormous towers in form of bastions, of which the greatest part were armed with heavy pieces of cannon.

“ The Russians, still expecting the attack to take place on the right bank of the Borys-thene, still kept a considerable portion of their troops on this side of the river; but seeing us at last arrive by the left bank, they thought themselves turned, and came in all haste to succour Smolensko, on the principal point where we were going to attack them, and they came forward with the utmost ardour, particularly as Alexander, in quitting the army, had recommended them to give battle in order to save Smolensko.\*

“ After employing the 16th in reconnoitring the place and its environs, the Emperor confided the left to the Duke of Elchingen, in-

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\* See the Thirteenth Bulletin.

" clining towards the Borysthene ; the Prince  
" of Eckmuhl had the centre ; the Prince Po-  
" niatowski the right ; and further on, on one  
" side, was the cavalry of the King of Naples ;  
" at last, the guard and ourselves, the fourth  
" division, composed the reserve. The eighth  
" corps, under the command of the Duke of  
" Abrantes, was also expected ; but that Gene-  
" ral making a false movement, he lost him-  
" self.\*

" Half the day was passed in observations. The  
" enemy occupied Smolensko with thirty thou-  
" sand men, the rest were in reserve on the right  
" bank, and communicating by means of bridges,  
" constructed below the town. But Napoleon,  
" perceiving that the garrison availed them-  
" selves of the time that had been left them to  
" strengthen their fortifications, ordered Prince  
" Poniatowski to advance, having on his left Smo-  
" lensko, and on his right the Borysthene ; and  
" recommended him to construct batteries so as  
" to destroy the bridges, and by that means  
" intercept the communication between the two  
" banks. The Prince of Eckmuhl, who still kept  
" the centre, attacked two retrenched-suburbs,  
" each defended by seven or eight thousand

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\* See the Thirteenth Bulletin.

" infantry. General Friand finished the investing between the first division and the division of Poles.

" Towards mid-day, the light cavalry of General Bruyères drove away the Russian cavalry, and took possession of the platform nearest the bridge. On that point was formed a battery of sixty pieces of cannon, the fire of which was so well directed on masses of the enemy, that remained on the other bank, that they were constrained to retire. Against this battery were opposed two of the enemy's, consisting each of twenty pieces of cannon. The Prince of Eckmuhl, whose duty it was to storm the town, confided the attack of the suburbs to the right, to General Morand; and those to the left, to General Gudin. After a severe fire of musketry, these two divisions forced the positions of the enemy, and followed them with wonderful intrepidity, as far as the covered way, which they found strewed with their dead. On the left, the Duke of Elchingen forced, in the same manner, the retrenchments occupied by the Russians, and constrained them to take refuge in the town, in the towers, or on the ramparts, which they defended with obstinacy. General Barclay de Tolly perceiving

" then that the assault of the town was  
" likely to be attempted, reinforced it with  
" two new divisions, and two regiments of in-  
" fantry of the guard. The battle continued  
" the whole of the night; but soon after, as the  
" obscurity became greater, the flames were seen  
" distinctly, which, in an instant, were commu-  
" nicated to the principal quarters of Smo-  
" lensko, and, in the middle of a fine summer's  
" night, presented to our view the same specta-  
" cle that an eruption of Mount Vesuvius offers  
" to the inhabitants of Naples.

" At one o'clock, the ruins of the town were  
" abandoned. Our first grenadiers, at two  
" o'clock in the morning, got ready to mount  
" the breach, which, to their great astonish-  
" ment, they approached without resistance,  
" and discovered that the place was entirely  
" evacuated. We took possession of it, and  
" found several pieces of cannon, that the ene-  
" my could not take away.

" Never," said this officer to me, " can you  
" imagine the horrid devastation the interior of  
" Smolensko offered to our view, and during  
" during the whole course of my life I can never  
" forget it. All the streets, all the places were  
" covered with the bodies of expiring Russians,  
" over which the flames shed a melancholy

"glare that heightened the horror of the surrounding scene: Ah! how much those princes have to answer for, who, to satisfy their own ambition, sacrifice thousands of their subjects to such disasters!"

The next day (19th Aug.) we entered Smolensko, by the suburb that is built along the river-side; on every side we saw nothing but ruins and dead bodies; palaces, still burning, offered only to our sight, walls half ~~burnt~~ <sup>burnt</sup> ~~left~~ <sup>left</sup> by the flames, and, amongst the ruins, the blackened skeletons of the wretched inhabitants that the fire had consumed. The few houses that remained were encumbered with the soldiery, and at the door was the proprietor without an asylum, deplored the death of his children, and the loss of his fortune. The churches only afforded some consolation to the unhappy victims who sought shelter. The cathedral, celebrated in Europe, and held in great veneration by the Russians, held out a refuge to the unfortunate who had escaped the flames. In this church, and around its altars, were seen whole families extended on the ground; on one side, an old man expiring, while casting a last look on the saint he had all his life invoked; on the other, little children in arms, suckled by mothers worn down by adversity,

and shedding tears of the bitterest anguish over their devoted offspring.

In the midst of all this desolation, the passage of the army into the interior of the town, formed a striking contrast; here the submission of the conquered—there the pride attendant upon victory; the former having lost their all—the latter rich with spoil, and ignorant of defeat, marched proudly to the sound of warlike music, at the same time with fear and admiration at the unhappy remains of a vanquished population.

The grand bridge across the Borysthene, which had been burnt, and which communicated with the other part of the town, where there did not remain a single house, was promptly repaired. In the mean time, General Grouchy crossed a ford at the extremity of the suburb by which we entered, having with him the fourth corps with all their artillery: and in this interval, they completed other bridges, which so accelerated the passage, that the same day the artillery and cavalry of the King of Naples followed the enemy on the road to Moscow.

All the fourth corps having succeeded in crossing the river, encamped themselves on the heights that surround the town, and by which is the post-road from Porietsch to Petersburg. This being a position of the greatest

moment, every one was astonished that the enemy had not defended it better; for, in guarding it, our march would have been considerably retarded; it would have shut up the high road to Moscow, and have interfered with our entire command of the town.

While the centre of the army followed up this victory, General Gouvion St. Cyr gained, on the banks of the Dwina, some important victories: after the battle of Drissa, Prince Wittgenstein, being reinforced by twelve battalions, resolved to take up the offensive against the Duke of Reggio. The latter, seeing himself on the point of being attacked, united the Bavarian corps to that which he already commanded. The attack actually took place on the 16th and 17th of August; but at the moment the Duke of Reggio was taking measures to repel it, a grape-shot struck him in the shoulder, which so dangerously wounded him as to oblige him to quit the field of battle, and to give up his command to General Gouvion St. Cyr.

The latter disposed every thing for attack the next morning at day-break; and, the better to deceive the Russians, he ordered all the baggage, and a great part of the artillery and cavalry, to pass to the left bank of the Dwina, in sight of the enemy, which, returning up the

river, passed it again at Polotsk without being seen. The enemy, deceived by this clever manœuvre, judging us to be retreating, advanced to follow us; but, instead of finding us disposed to quit the ground, they found us ranged in order of battle, and, our artillery having been mounted on batteries, fired on them. At the same time our infantry, under the protection of our cannon, attacked the left and centre of the corps commanded by General Wittgenstein. The two divisions of Generals Wrede and Roy, having combined their movements with great bravery and intelligence, left Spas together. The division of Legrand, in position on the left of this village, was connected with that of General Verdier, one of whose brigades observed the right of the enemy; and the division of Merle covered the front of the town of Polotsk.

The enemy, although surprised at seeing us so well disposed, nevertheless made a good appearance, confiding in his numberless artillery; but at last, towards the evening, Prince Wittgenstein seeing his centre and his left forced, retired in echelon, after furiously defending every position. By this obstinate resistance he succeeded in saving his army; which, notwithstanding the arrival of powerful reinforcements, en-

deavoured in vain to resume the offensive. We should have taken a great number of prisoners, but for the woods which facilitated their escape. Those who fell into our hands, were found wounded on the field of battle, and by their numbers we were enabled to judge of the greatness of the loss the Russians had sustained. Several pieces of cannon added to the trophies of this glorious day.

In truth, this victory was dearly purchased by the loss of several brave Bavarian officers, especially by the mortal wounds of Generals de Roy and Sierbein: the first was particularly regretted; the soldiers lost in him a father, and the officers, a chief whose talents and consummate experience were held in veneration throughout the Bavarian army. Generals, officers, and soldiers, rivalled each other in acts of bravery for the success of the battle. Among the first, Count Gouvion St. Cyr praised Generals Legrand, Verdier (wounded), Merle, Von Wrede, and Aubry; the latter, General of the artillery, distinguished himself in his department. The Count closed his report by invoking the benevolence of the Emperor towards his officers. He thus did justice to all except to himself, on which point he observed a profound silence; but his modesty was the more

conspicuous ; and this virtue, which is peculiar only to great captains, was a few days after rewarded on the field of battle with the marshal's staff.

While our corps on the left gained important victories on the Dwina ; those of the centre distinguished themselves in combats not less glorious.

The Duke of Elchingen, having passed the Borysthene (19th August) above Smolensko, joined the King of Naples in order to pursue the enemy ; a league further on he met part of his rear-guard, consisting of a division of about six thousand men. That instant their position was carried, and the bayonet covered the field of battle with dead bodies.

This corps, which protected the retreat of the Russians, having been forced to retire on a second echelon, took post on the platform of Valontina. The first line, however, was broken by the 18th regiment, and towards four o'clock in the afternoon, a fire of musketry commenced with the whole rear-guard, then about fifteen thousand strong. The Duke of Abrantes, who had lost his way on the right of Smolensko, made a wrong movement, and could not reach the road to Moscow time enough to cut off the

retreat of this rear-guard.\* The first echelons of the enemy therefore returned to the charge, and engaged successively four divisions. The Russians were the more interested in the defence of this position, as, besides its real strength, it was in a country regarded as impregnable, from the defeats the Poles had always sustained here in their ancient wars. Thence the Russians, by virtue of a religious tradition, connected with this platform an idea of certain victory, and decorated it with the pompous title of the *Sacred Field*.

If it was of great importance to the enemy to maintain it, it was not less important for us to carry it, in order to annoy his retreat, and to get possession of all the baggage, and the carts with wounded from Smolensko, the evacuation of which was protected by this rear-guard.

At six o'clock in the evening, the division Gudin, sent to support the thirteenth corps against the numerous troops which the enemy called to his succour, appeared in column before the centre of the enemy's position. Supported by the division Ledru, they carried the position.

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\* See 13th and 14th Bulletin of the Campaign.

The 7th light infantry, the 12th, 21st, and 127th, which composed the division Gudin, attacked with such impetuosity that the enemy fled, persuaded they were the Imperial guards. But so much bravery cost the life of the gallant general who commanded them. He was one of the most distinguished officers of the army, and was equally regretted for his moral virtues, and for his bravery and rare intrepidity. His death, however, was avenged, for his division made great havoc amongst the enemy, who fled towards Moscow, leaving the *Sacred Field* covered with the wrecks of their corps. Among the dead were found the bodies of Generals Skalon and Balla. It was even asserted, that the General of cavalry, Koff, being mortally wounded, was to the Russians a loss equally great with the one we had to deplore.

At three o'clock in the morning of the following day, the Emperor, on the field of battle, distributed rewards to the regiments which had distinguished themselves. To the 127th, being a new regiment, and which had behaved well, Napoleon granted the right of carrying an eagle; a right which they did not enjoy before, not having been present in any former action. These rewards bestowed on a spot rendered famous by victory, in the midst of the dead and the dying,

exhibited a scene of grandeur that could assimilate our exploits to any thing heroic which antiquity can produce.

When at Smolensko, the fourth corps changed its chief of the staff. General Dessolets, who had till then filled that situation, disgusted to see his services remain unnoticed, desired to enjoy in peace the esteem which his talents had procured him. The army, recollecting that he had shared Moreau's glory and disgrace, approved his determination, and were aware of the obstacles in his way to obtain a rank, which could put him on a level with those who had outstepped him in his career, and who would always be preferred to him. The Emperor, yielding to the entreaties of this skilful general, granted him an honourable retreat, and appointed Baron Guilleminot his successor, who was well known to the Viceroy, by his having exercised the same functions for a short time after the battle of Wagram.

During the four days which Napoleon remained at Smolensko, he reviewed the different corps which had distinguished themselves since the opening of the campaign. In this respect none was more entitled to this honourable distinction than the fourth corps. It was at length granted us, and the chiefs of each division, with the exception of General Pino, who, with the

fifteenth, was gone to Witepsk, received orders to put their soldiers under arms. (22d of August).

—The whole of our army, in the most splendid array, was drawn up in a vast plain a little beyond that on which we were encamped. A fine appearance, and above all, the recollection of the brilliant actions at Witepsk, gained our corps the rewards due to its prowess, and which attested the munificence of the chief who deigned to grant them.

It had hitherto been believed, that Napoleon, desirous only to re-establish the kingdom of Poland, would finish his conquests by taking the two towns of Witepsk and Smolensko, which, by their position, closed the narrow passage comprised between the Borysthene and the Dwina. Every one considered these two towns as points for our repose on the approach of winter; and, if Napoleon had limited the operations of this campaign to the taking of Riga, fortifying Witepsk and Smolensko; and, more particularly, if he had organized Poland, the whole of which had been conquered, there is no doubt, but, that in the following spring, he would have forced the Russians either to subscribe to his conditions, or to run the risk of an almost certain destruction both of Moscow and Petersburg. Instead, however, of adopting so wise a plan, Napoleon,

blinded by the lustre of his prosperity, and at a distance of six hundred leagues from France, with ruined horses, without either provisions, magazines, or hospitals, ventured upon the great road to Moscow. As a last proof of his imprudence, he left in his rear a Russian army cantoned in Moldavia, and which was ready to march against us on the ratification of the treaty of peace, which had been already concluded with the Porte.

This army having ceased hostilities against the Turks, was then commanded by Admiral Tschikakoff, who constantly sent reinforcements from his army to that in Wolhynia, opposed to the corps of Prince Schwartzenberg. Napoleon had flattered himself that the Austrians, in obedience to his orders, would, in a line with our own operations against Barclay de Tolly, have repulsed the corps of Tormasow, Ertel, and Essen ; and that, in consequence, our allies, ravaging the Ukraine, would penetrate into the governments of Kiew and Kaluga, and join us on our entry into Moscow. But the manœuvres of the Russian generals frustrated this great plan. Victors and vanquished, by turns they defended every position ; and, taking advantage of the chances of war, they returned continually to the ground they had abandoned. The fortress of Bobruisk therefore

never surrendered, and the Austrians never saw the banks of the Borysthene. Leaving Smolensko, 23d of August, we went to Volodimerowa, a village on the road ; on its right is a *chateau*, built of wood, on an eminence, the grounds about which are extremely marshy. Arrived on this height, at a distance of about five leagues from Smolensko, we halted. We were induced to believe, that it was the intention of the Prince to march to Doukhovchtchina, in order to fall back afterwards to Doroghbouï, in the centre of the grand army ; but General Grouchy, who had preceded us with his cavalry, reported that he had repulsed the enemy to a distance of more than twenty leagues. The Viceroy (24th of August), who could now dispense with pushing on to Doukhovchtchina, determined to search on bye-ways for a road that would conduct him straight to the high road leading to Doroghbouï. He found this road, after following a very good route, traced by the Russians themselves, the better to effect their retreat.

On this march we traversed an excellent country. We saw, astonishing things, cattle grazing in the fields, inhabitants in the villages, and houses that had not been plundered. The soldier, possessing abundance, forgot his fatigues, unmindful of the length of a march which had lasted

several hours. At length, towards the evening, we arrived at Pologhi, a village at a small distance from the high road. The following morning (25th of August), we crossed the Vop, a small river that would have attracted our attention could we have foreseen how fatal it would one day prove to us. We might, however, have formed an idea of its state in winter, from the difficulty we had in passing it in the midst of summer. Its bed was of a great depth, and the banks so steep, that the artillery passed it with great difficulty, and only by doubling the number of horses to the pieces.

Continuing our march, we came again in sight of the Borysthene. Its marshy environs, covered with wood, nearly reached the hill on which lay the road we pursued. A league further on we perceived the high turrets of the fine castle of Zazélé ; at a distance they give to this building the appearance of a town. Close by was a lake, where the cavalry of General Grouchy refreshed themselves. They had arrived before us, and encamped around the castle of Zazélé.

From hence the Viceroy sent some officers to Napoleon, who was at Doroghbouï ; but, although General Grouchy had pushed his advanced-guard along the high road, we were yet doubtful of its being entirely cleared. The de-

spatched officers therefore crossed the Borysthene below Zazélé, and rejoining the post-road from Smolensko, they arrived safe at Doroghobouï, where the staff of the grand army had established their head-quarters.

This borough, situated on an eminence, offered a military position capable of stopping the progress of an army marching on two high roads from Smolensko to Moscow. Notwithstanding these advantages, it had been but feebly defended, owing to the great losses sustained by the Russians in the combats at Smolensko and Valontina. We were on the point of entering Doroghobouï, when an orderly officer from Napoleon brought despatches to the Viceroy. Having read them, the Prince gave orders to choose a favourable spot in our neighbourhood, to encamp his divisions. The want of water having obliged us to push on to Mikailovskoë, we established ourselves near this village ; the cavalry was in the rear, the infantry of the royal guard was in the centre ; and, on the flanks, were the two French divisions, which formed part of our corps.

A league from Mikailovskoë (27th of August), we came through two villages situated in a marshy valley ; and shortly after, entering the plain through which runs the Borysthene, we followed the road to Blaghove, where our passage across

the river was to take place. On our right were cultivated hills, with several villages. The smoke issuing from the houses made us conjecture that they had not been abandoned. We saw at a distance their peaceable inhabitants place themselves on the summit of the hills, anxious to know whether we came to trouble the peace of their cottages.

The sources of the Borysthene not being far off, this river appears towards this point only like a brook. We forded it with ease, and the artillery had no other difficulty but to get over its banks; which, like all Russia, are extremely high, in order to contain the great masses of water produced by the melting of the snow.

The Viceroy, always present at the crossing of a river, did not quit this till all the troops had passed it. The fourth corps forming still the extreme left of the grand army, we marched over unbeatén tracks. To prevent losing ourselves, the Prince ordered General Triaire, commanding the advanced guard, to post dragoons along the road. This wise precaution proved beneficial to the detachments, and especially to the stragglers, who having no further difficulties to obstruct their way, arrived all safely at Agopochina. Formerly these unhappy beings, when left behind, found themselves in the midst of forests, or in

immense plains, intersected by paths all equal in size; and not finding even a person to speak to, they erred in these vast solitudes, and perished sooner or later from want, or by the sword of the enemy.

The village of Agopochina, where we halted, is remarkable for a vast *chateau*, and for its fine church built of stone. The four faces are ornamented with four peristyles. The sanctuary, constructed according to the Greek ritual, was very rich, and adorned with several pictures, which reminded us of those brought by the Greeks from Constantinople, when, in the fourteenth century, they came to establish in Italy, their schools for painting. From this village, the Commandant Sewlinge, who had lately joined our staff, was sent with important despatches to the King of Naples. The King, not having received these despatches, and the commandant not making his appearance, we felt the painful conviction that he had fallen into the hands of the cossacks.

The next day (28th of August) we continued on the left of the high road, marching always nearly in a line with the corps of the centre. The tract which we followed, could never before have been frequented by an army. It was narrow, frequently cut by ravins, and often so con-

tracted, that it resembled a path, traced merely to divide the grounds. Arrived at a village, we found three roads, one before us, one on our right, and the third on our left. We took the latter, which conducted us, after a march of three hours, to an abandoned *chateau*, within a league of Béreski.

Early in the morning (29th of August) we left this *chateau*, in a thick fog. The frequent halts, ordered by the Viceroy, and the reconnoitring parties which he sent to the right, as if to listen whether the cannon were firing on the high road, made us think that he was impatient to know whether Napoleon met with any obstacles in his march.

We approached Viazma. This small town, which, in Russia, may be reckoned a great one, was in a position advantageous for the enemy, situated amongst branches of the river of Viazma. It was surrounded by ravines, and stood on a fine platform that commands the plain and the defile, through which passes the high road from Smolensko. The Russians did not profit much by these advantages ; they but feebly defended their position, and, after a slight resistance, they set fire to the principal buildings and retired. We arrived when Viazma was a prey to the flames ; and, although accustomed to conflagra-

tions, we could not help looking with pity on this unhappy town, formerly inhabited by ten thousand souls. Though newly founded, it contained more than sixteen churches ; the houses, all new, and constructed in a style of elegance, were enveloped by clouds of smoke, and their destruction caused us the more pain, as we had not seen any finer since our quitting Smolensko.

The Viceroy remained in the plain, where he halted for more than two hours. Placed on a rising ground, we observed distinctly the progress of the flames, and heard the guns firing on the enemy beyond the town. A numerous cavalry, which arrived from all sides, were encamped in the environs. Prince Eugene, having received the Emperor's orders, now passed the little river of Viazma, which runs by the town of this name ; and, on his left, he met his troops, whom he had preceded, and whose march had been retarded by the passage of the Viazma. We met yet another branch of the Viazma, the access to which was so muddy, as to render it impossible to ford it at any place : it was therefore necessary to march alongside, till we found a paltry bridge for our passage. From hence we came to a hill, from the top of which we perceived at a distance a fine *chateau*, formed by four pavilions, and a fine church. On entering, we learned that the vil-

lage was called Novoe, and that the *chateau* had been plundered by the light cavalry.

In this village we made a day's halt (30th of August), having on the left the royal guards, and the fourteenth division; the thirteenth was in front. The artillery of these divisions was placed in a battery facing the roads on which it was supposed that the enemy might appear.

On putting ourselves in march again (31st August), the fourth corps was rejoined by the Bavarian cavalry, under General Preyssing. The Viceroy and the staff went along with them. On the road we met with two neat *chateaux* completely ravaged. We halted at the second, and visited a very fine garden with pleasant walks; the pavilions had been newly decorated, but they offered now only the image of the most frightful destruction. The furniture was every where broken; pieces of the most precious china were scattered about the garden, and costly prints had been torn out of their frames, and were dispersed by the winds.

The Viceroy had pushed his march much further on than the castle of Pakrovo. Seeing, however, the infantry much behind him, he came back to this castle, in which some provisions were found, and also a quantity of hay and straw and excellent forage.

Since the affair at Witepsk, the fourth corps had not met the enemy again, and had not even perceived any of the detachments of cossacks, which, in the first Polish campaign, continually harassed our troops, and intercepted the baggage; but after quitting Viazma, more circumspection was necessary on our march.

Although the enemy had not presented himself, yet, in order to observe our movements, we were nevertheless certain that he would soon appear; and, the next day (1st September), being about half-way on our accustomed march, our cavalry was stopped by the cossacks. Two or three cannon shots were the signal of this meeting. The Viceroy immediately put the cavalry of the Italian guards in order of battle, preceded by a great number of sharp-shooters. They drove before them the enemy's squadrons, who retired in proportion as we advanced, without opposing any resistance. They continued to do so till within the environs of Ghiat, of which the Emperor had just taken possession. Above this town is a small river, which they crossed, and a moment after, as if to observe us, they put themselves in order of battle on the height that commands the plain, on which we arrived. The Viceroy, after having made me examine the fords that could facilitate the passage of the

river, ordered the Bavarian troops to cross it at the point pitched upon, which was exactly between two little villages, occupied by the cos-sacks. These, however, no sooner perceived this movement, than they abandoned the villages and the heights; of which the Bavarian cavalry, followed by their artillery, soon took possession. Arrived on this height, we saw the enemy flying on all sides. They were closely pursued, but as night approached, our corps went to take quarters in the little village of Paulovo, at the distance of half a league from Ghiat.

The Emperor having passed three days in this town, we stopped likewise at Paulovo and Woremiewo (2d and 3d September). Here the Emperor, in general orders, granted to the army a repose, which was to be employed in collecting provisions, and cleaning the arms, in order to prepare for a battle, which the enemy seemed willing to accept. Lastly, the marauding detachments were to be recalled the following evening, if they wished to participate in the honour of a battle.

## BOOK IV.

*THE MOSKWA.\**

AFTER the taking of Smolensko, the Emperor Napoleon was not ignorant of the peace that Russia had concluded with the Turks, and knew that she would soon have at her disposal all the Moldavian army: nevertheless, he followed up his successes without considering the future. But he ought to have perceived that this army would soon attack him; and what ought further to have convinced him of it, was the news he received, at Ghiat, of the arrival of General Kutusoff, from the banks of the Danube, who took command of the Russian army, (after having subdued the Turks). This army had been previously confided to Count Barclay de Tolly.

This general, who was looked up to by the Muscovites as the hope of their country, arrived, the 29th of August, at Czarevo-Saïmiche. The officers and soldiers hailed as their chief this venerable warrior, already famed in the an-

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\* Or, the river Moscow, which takes its name from the capital of the Russian empire.

nals of Russia; and the inhabitants of Ghiat informed us that the sight of him had elated the army with hope and joy. In fact, he had scarcely made his appearance, as commander-in-chief, when he announced to the army, that no more retrograde movements were to be made by the Russians, and that he might the better defend Moscow, he chose a strong position, four days' march from the city, between Ghiat and Mojaïsk, where he could give such a battle as often decides the fate of empires. Each party was sanguine in its expectations as to victory. The one was animated for the defence of their country, and all they held dear on earth—the other, accustomed to conquer, were filled with ideas of grandeur and heroism, which continued success naturally inspires. We were eager for the fight, and such is the effect that courage gives over numbers, that we calculated, the evening before the action, the fruits of the approaching victory.

During the stay of Napoleon at Ghiat, our general quarters was transported from Paulovo to Woremiewo, where there is a beautiful seat, belonging to Prince Kutusoff. When the staff had entered this village, the Viceroy, accompanied by several officers, wished to see its environs. Scarce had he been gone a quarter of an hour, when he discovered that the plain was

filled with cossacks; who advanced, as if to charge the group that surrounded the Prince Eugene; but on seeing some dragoons, that formed his escort, they fled precipitately, and appeared no more in the neighbourhood of Woremiewo.

During our stay in this place, some soldiers of the 106th regiment, going on a marauding party, fell in with a post-chaise, occupied by a Russian officer, accompanied by a surgeon; the first declared, on being interrogated, that he was coming from Riga, his native country, and was going to join the general quarters of Kutusoff, who had superseded Barclay de Tolly. Although this officer was descended from a good family in Livonia, and was decorated with several crosses and medals, the Viceroy would not see him, justly suspecting that he had exposed himself purposely to be taken, hoping by this means to discover our manœuvres. We surprised several peasants on an unfrequented road, and particularly in the neighbourhood of Mojaïsk, where the enemy had retrenched themselves.

Having passed two days at Woremiewo, we left it on the 4th of September, and passed through some woods, where they informed us some cossacks had been seen. The reports of the ad-

vanced-guard confirming this news, made the Viceroy give orders for a halt, in an extensive plain, were all our corps were assembled. The Prince, heading the cavalry, ordered the infantry to follow immediately, and the guard, placed as a reserve, brought up the rear. It was in this order that we advanced to meet the enemy. When we reached a village, named Louzos, we found ourselves impeded by a rivulet. It appeared to us that the cossacks, who were assembled on the opposite side, and forming themselves into squadrons, wished to oppose our passage; but the Viceroy ordering the cavalry to mount the ravine, the Russians were charged in the rear, and fled with precipitation.

On gaining the height, we discovered before us several villages on fire, and hearing much cannonading, we thought ourselves near the road that Napoleon had taken. There was, also, near the post-house, called Ghridneva, an immense ravin that crossed the main road, and on the opposite side was a large hill, where the Russians had established batteries, after the severe action that had taken place during the day.

When the enemy perceived that the fourth corps were forming on their right, they reconnoitred us with a numerous cavalry, which retired as the cannon opened upon them. They

appeared to have the intention of occupying a certain part of the wood, therefore the Viceroy ordered Colonel Rambourgh, of the 3d Italian chasseurs, to march towards it, and bring them to action. The cossacks observed this movement without being intimidated, and when the chasseurs were on the point of coming up with them, they rushed from the wood, crying "Houra! hora!"—a cry become famous, and which these barbarians always use when they charge their enemies. The Italian chasseurs received them with great coolness. The action was smart, but of no duration, for the cossacks seeing the Bavarian light-horse advance, quitted the field, leaving in our possession some few prisoners.

The Russians, nevertheless, maintained their positions on the hill, whence they kept up a smart fire on us as we advanced; several bullets fell among a group of officers who surrounded the Prince. In spite of all, we succeeded in gaining the ravine, and effecting our junction with the advanced-guard of the grand army, commanded by the King of Naples. We distinguished him by his white feather, at the head of his troops, signalizing himself like an intrepid soldier.

As soon as the Viceroy was convinced of the presence of the King of Naples, he went imme-

dately to him, in order to concert proper measures with him. The place of their conference was not changed, and both of them discoursed, with the utmost sang-froid, between the batteries, while they witnessed those around them falling every minute by the shot of the enemy.

At night-fall we returned to Louzos, where we had no other shelter than wretched barns, covered with thatch. Hunger added to our fatigue, and we had nothing to satisfy its cravings: the deplorable state of the hamlets, which were ransacked by the cossacks, could yield us no relief. However, we were near the intrenched camp at Mojaïsk, where Kutusoff thought to defeat us; which he would have effected, if he could have detained us for some days before his formidable lines.

The position of Ghridneva, which the Russians had defended the preceding evening, was evacuated during the night. The King of Naples, in the ardour of pursuit (5th September), advanced rapidly; the fourth corps, which continued to flank the left wing of the army, followed the main road, always keeping about the distance of a league. On leaving a wood infested with cossacks, we passed through a village that had been pillaged by these barbarians.

Their ravages enabled us easily to follow their traces. Being arrived at the foot of a hill, we discovered, on the top, some of their squadrons, ranged in order of battle, round a very fine house, which overlooked the neighbouring plains. The Viceroy immediately made the Bavarians march on this point, who, notwithstanding the obstacles which we met with in our way, reached the summit, in the greatest order. As the allies advanced, the enemy retired ; and, in descending on the other side of the hill, our artillery-men succeeded in planting on the terrace of the house, several pieces of cannon, which were fired upon them as they retired. We followed them through the wood, and arrived at an open place, from whence we saw long columns of Russians, who, pursued by our troops, took up a position on an extensive plain, at the top of a hill, about half a league distant, and where, it was said, Prince Kutusoff intended to give a decisive battle. On our right, we saw, below us, the abbey of Kolotskoï. The massy towers of this building gave it the appearance of a town. The coloured tiles, with which it was covered, reflected the rays of the sun through the dust raised by our immense cavalry, and formed a wonderful contrast to the gloomy and savage aspect which the surrounding country presented. The Russians

intended to arrest our progress, and devastated, in the most shocking manner, all the plain, where we intended to encamp. The corn had been cut, the woods destroyed, and the villages burnt ; in a word, we found nothing on which we could feed the horses, and not even a shelter for ourselves.

We halted on a hill. During this time the centre of the army vigorously pursued the enemy, and obliged them to retire upon the eminence where they were entrenched. They remained inactive till nearly two o'clock in the afternoon ; when the Viceroy, followed only by his staff, reconnoitred the approaches to the Russian position. We had scarcely began to form the line, when our dragoons, placed as sharp-shooters, announced the arrival of Napoleon. Immediately the name of the Emperor flew from mouth to mouth, and every one waited with impatience to see him. He soon made his appearance, followed by his principal officers, and took his station on an eminence, whence he could easily command a view of the whole camp of the enemy. Napoleon, after reconnoitring their position, observed attentively all the adjacent country, and began to hum some insignificant tune. He then conversed with the Viceroy ; and, mounting his horse, he went to consult the

Prince of Eckmuhl. During this time, the Viceroy ordered the 13th and 14th divisions to advance; the Italian guard, which had been left in the rear, was placed in reserve. These two divisions had scarcely reached the eminence whence they could attack the Russians, when a brisk musketry commenced on our right, between the sharp-shooters of Gerard's division (third division, first corps), and those of the enemy. At first we advanced very near to the ravine, which separated us from the enemy; but superior numbers obliged us to retire. The Russians had a redoubt towards the right extremity of our army, the destructive fire from which, carried consternation through our ranks. They had constructed it to fortify their left wing, which was the weak side of their intrenched camp. Napoleon knew this, and saw the necessity of destroying the redoubt. This honour was confided to Compan's division (fourth division, first corps), and these gallant men advanced to the attack, with an intrepidity that was a sure guarantee for the success of their undertaking. In this interval, the Prince Poniatowski manœuvred on our right with the cavalry, in order to turn the position; when he was at a convenient height, Compan's division attacked the redoubt, and succeeded in carrying it, after an hour's fighting.

The enemy, completely routed, abandoned the neighbouring woods, and, retreating in disorder towards the grand eminence, rejoined the centre of their army. Compan's division, in rendering themselves worthy of so brilliant an enterprise, purchased this honour with considerable loss. Twelve hundred of our men paid for this important position with their lives, and more than half remained dead in the intrenchments, which they had so gloriously carried. The next morning, Napoleon, while reviewing the 61st regiment, which had suffered most, asked the colonel what he had done with one of his battalions. *SIRE, replied he, it is in the redoubt.* The possession of the redoubt, did not in the least influence the success of the battle. Before the commencement, Napoleon wished to gain a point on the other side of the river, which separated us from the enemy. Thick underwood concealed their numerous sharp-shooters, and rendered the approach as difficult as it was dangerous. However, our courageous light company recommenced the attack with redoubled vigour; and although the day was nearly over, the fire on both sides continued with equal fury. At the same time, several villages on fire to the right, threw around a frightful glare. The cries of the combatants, the shot of the enemy,

the flames which were vomited from a thousand brasen mouths, carried every where destruction and death. Our corps, being ranged in order of battle, received with intrepidity the fire of the enemy, and coolly closed the ranks, as soon as a ball had laid any of their comrades low. In the mean time, the night becoming more obscure, abated the fire without abating our ardour; for each, uncertain of his aim, thought it better to reserve his force and ammunition for the next day. Scarcely had we ceased firing, when the Russians, encamped as it were on an amphitheatre, lighted innumerable fires. The resplendent brightness, gave the hill an enchanting aspect, and formed a striking contrast with our camp; where the soldiers, deprived of every thing, reposed amidst all the horrors of war, hearing nothing around them but the groans of the wounded. The Viceroy caused his tent to be erected on the spot, where the Italian guard were placed in reserve. Couched in the underwood, we reposed after the fatigues of the day, in spite of an impetuous wind, and an excessively cold rain. Towards two o'clock, I was awakened by a staff-officer of our corps, who informed me that the Emperor wished for a plan of the ground we occupied the preceding evening. I transmitted it to Prince Eugene, who

immediately sent it to Napoleon. The next morning, at day-break, (6th of September), the Viceroy ordered me to improve this plan by inspecting the lines, and approaching the enemy as much as I possibly could, that I might the better discover the casualties of the ground on which they were encamped; and above all, to observe if they had not masked batteries, or ravines, which were unknown to us.\* After these instructions, I advanced, and discovered that the Russian camp was situated behind the river Kologha, upon a narrow eminence, and that its left was very much weakened by the loss of the redoubt, which we had taken the evening before. In our front, and opposite to us, was the village of Borodino, an extremely strong position †, situated at the con-

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\* The plan, which will be found here, has been engraved after that which the Viceroy used on the day of battle.

† Napoleon said in his bulletin of the battle of Moskwa, “The Viceroy, who formed our left, attacked and took the village of Borodino, which the enemy could not defend.” Prince Kutusoff, on the contrary, wrote to the Emperor Alexander, “The position which I have chosen in the village of Borodino, is one of the best that can be found in a flat country. It is to be wished, that the French would attack us in this position.” We made the attack, and it was so well defended, that General Plausanne, and Colonel Demay, of

fluence, which a little rivulet formed, with the Kologha : upon this were two grand redoubts, at the distance of two hundred toises from each other. That on the right had fired on us the evening before ; that on the left circumscribed a village, which they had destroyed, that they might place their artillery there ; this last communicated with Borodino, by three bridges, constructed upon the Kologha. Thus this village, and the rivulet which was in front, served the enemy for his advanced line. Upon the extremity of our left, the Italian cavalry had crossed the rivulet of Borodino ; but this village, placed on an eminence, was guarded by a numerous corps of Russian troops. All this ground was under the fire of their grand redoubts, as well as under that of several smaller masked ones along the river. As for our right, they knew that our success the evening before, had enabled us to cross the Kologha at this point, and the major part of our troops to advance at the back of the eminence, where was placed the grand redoubt of the enemy. We passed the rest of the day in reconnoitring the position of the Russians.

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the artillery, officers of our corps, were killed in the commencement of the action. The Russians commemorate on this day, the bloody battle of Borodino.

General Danthouard caused the fortifications, which were placed too much in the rear, to be reconstructed ; and on the left, they likewise constructed epaulments, where cannon might be placed in the form of batteries. In fact, all was prepared for a décisive blow ; when, towards the evening, the Emperor sent a proclamation to the chiefs of the corps, with orders not to read it to the soldiers till the next day, in the event that they came into action. For, although the position was both advantageous and strong, the enemy had so often eluded giving battle, that it was to be feared they would again act as they had done at Witepsk and Valontina ; but here necessity obliged them to come to action, although their aim was to save Moscow, from whence we were but three days' march. Our soldiers being much fatigued, and our horses quite exhausted, had so weakened our army, that every thing seemed to promise to the Russians an easy victory. On our side we were equally assured, that we were in a situation to conquer, or to perish. And this idea, gave to all such courage, that in spite of the force of the Russian army, and their impenetrable intrenchments, each looked upon our entrance into Moscow as inevitable. Although our fatigue made us sensible of the want of sleep, there

were, however, amongst us, men enamoured of glory, whose exaltation of spirits was such, as to leave them incapable of repose. These watched: and, in the obscurity of a night far advanced, while the fires of the sleeping soldiers, almost extinct, threw their last rays of light over the piled arms of the soldiery, these same men, accustomed to meditate, reflected on the wonders of our expedition, upon the result of a battle which could decide the fate of two powerful empires; they compared the silence of the night with the tumult of the morrow:—in their imaginations, they saw death hovering over many of their unfortunate comrades:—they then for an instant thought of their friends, their country, and the uncertainty of seeing them again, plunged them into melancholy. All at once, before daybreak, the sound of the drum was heard, the officers cried to arms, the men seized them, and all, in order for battle, waited only the signal for action. The colonels, placing themselves in the centre of their regiments, gave orders, that each captain, surrounded by his company, should read aloud the following proclamation:—

“ SOLDIERS,

“ This is the battle so much desired by you !  
“ for the future the victory depends on your-

"selves. It is now necessary to us, it will give us abundance, good winter-quarters, and a prompt return to our country ! Conduct yourselves as at Austeriltz, at Friedland, at Witepsk, at Smolensko, that the latest posterity may relate, with pride, your conduct on this day ; that they may say of you,—He was at the great battle under the walls of Moscow." Every one remained penetrated with the truths contained in these energetic words, and they replied to them by reiterated acclamations. Some were animated by the love of glory, others flattered by the hopes of recompense, but all were convinced, that imperious necessity imposed on them the law, to conquer or to die. To the sentiments of self-preservation, were added ideas of duty and of valour. At this remembrance, the souls of each were animated and elated, and each figured to himself that this important day might place him in the rank of those privileged men, born to excite the envy of their cotemporaries, and the admiration of posterity.

Such were the feelings of the army, when a radiant sun broke from a thick fog, which might shine for the last time on many amongst us. It is recorded, that at this sight, Napoleon cried to those around him, "There is the sun of Austerlitz." The action was at the point of commencing,

the armies were in sight of each other, the cannoneers at their pieces, and they only waited the signal to begin. At last, on the 7th of September, the firing of a cannon from our principal battery announced that we were engaged.\* Immediately our thirteenth division marched upon the village of Borodino, which the enemy had already fired. Our troops then crossed the rivulet, and arrived at the village. Orders were given, that they should confine themselves to the occupation of this village; but, carried away by the ardour natural to Frenchmen, they crossed the river Kologha, and took possession of one of the bridges which joined the village to the eminence; It was then that General Plausanne, willing to moderate the order of the soldiers of the 106th, ran to the bridge to recall them, when a ball struck him in the middle of the body. Beloved during his life, the most lively regret was felt for his death. On this occasion, one cannot too much celebrate the ardour of the 92d regiment; which, seeing the 106th had ventured too far, crossed the bridge of Borodino, and arrived to reinforce this regiment, which without its help must have been taken, while the thirteenth di-

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\* See the plan of the field of battle.

vision possessed themselves of Borodino. The fourteenth, crossing the Kologho under the eminence, lodged themselves in a ravine near the principal redoubt, whence the enemy poured a horrible fire. On this day, the Viceroy, besides his own corps, had under his orders the divisions of Gerard and Morand, forming the first and third of the first corps. Near eight o'clock Morand's division, which was in action, and formed the right extreme of the fourth corps, was warmly attacked at the moment when it was preparing to march upon the redoubt, a movement which ought to have been immediately seconded by Gerard's division. But while General Morand sustained the efforts of the enemy's lines, he detached upon his left the 30th regiment, and took possession of the redoubt. This position being carried, our artillery crowned the heights, and seized the advantage which the Russians had hitherto had over us, during two hours. The guns, which had been turned against us, now became favourable. The battle was lost to the enemy when he thought it was but begun. Part of his artillery was taken, and the rest retreated to the rear. In this extremity, Prince Kutusoff saw that every thing was lost to Russia. Wishing to save her, and at the same time maintain the reputation he had acquired by

length of services, he renewed the combat, and attacked with all his forces the strong positions he had just lost. Three hundred pieces of cannon, placed on these heights, spread devastation and death among them, and their disheartened soldiery found their graves at the feet of those ramparts they had themselves raised, and which they regarded as the bulwark of Moscow ; holy sacred city !

But the 30th regiment, attacked on every side, not being able to keep the redoubt it had carried, was unaided by the third division, as yet scarce in order of battle. Thus this gallant regiment, led by General Bonami, was constrained to give in to the superior force that weighed down on it, and was forced to return with the loss of its chief to rejoin its division, which, with that of General Gerard, continued to withstand the utmost efforts of the Russians.

The enemy, encouraged by the success he had just obtained, brought forward his reserve, with the intent of striking a decisive blow : it was composed in part of the Imperial guard. With all his forces, he attacked our centre, which had served our right as a pivot. We expected for a moment our lines would have been broken, and that we should have lost the redoubt we had gained the preceding evening ; but General

Friand, coming up with twenty-four pieces of cannon, put a stop to their impetuosity, mowing down ranks at a time, who continued exposed to our fire during two hours, neither daring to advance or recede. They remained in this uncertainty, of which we took advantage, to snatch from them a victory they already held as certain.

The Viceroy seized this decisive moment, and rode towards his right to order the simultaneous attack of the grand redoubt, by the first, third, and fourteenth divisions. Having arranged all three in order of battle, these troops advanced with coolness. They approached even the retrenchments of the enemy, when they, firing all their artillery, charged upon us with grape-shot, and threw our ranks into consternation. Our troops were at first intimidated by this fatal reception, but the Prince reanimated their expiring courage, in calling to their recollection, the divers circumstances in which they had covered themselves with glory; saying to one, "Keep up that courage that has gained you the title of Invincible;" to another, "Remember, your reputation depends on this day;" then, turning towards the 9th of the line, he said to them, with emotion, "Brave soldiers, remember you were with me at Wagram, when we broke the enemy's centre."

By these words, and still more by his example, he inflamed the valour of his troops to such a degree, that one and all, shouting with joy, marched with ardour on the redoubt. His Highness riding up and down the ranks, gave orders to attack it with coolness, and directed it himself at the head of Broussier's division. At the same instant a division of cuirassiers, from the centre of the grand army, rushed on the redoubt, and offered to our wonder-struck senses an astonishing spectacle.\* All these heights that commanded us appeared in an instant a mass of moving iron: the sun's rays falling on the arms and cuirasses of the soldiery, together with the flames of the cannon that on every side vomited death, gave to the redoubt the appearance of a volcano in the midst of the army.

The enemy's infantry, near this point, and placed behind a ravine, kept up such a terrible fire on our cuirassiers, as obliged them immediately to retire. Our infantry took their place; and, turning the redoubt to the right and left, recommenced a furious combat with the Russians, whose efforts rivalled our own.

The Viceroy and his staff, in spite of the terrible fire kept up by the enemy, remained at the

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\* See the plan of the field of battle.

head of Broussier's division, followed by the 13th and 30th regiments; they advanced on the redoubt, and entering it at the gorge, massacred on their pieces, the cannoneers that worked them. However, the Russians, witnesses of this attack, immediately ordered the cuirassiers of the guard to advance, to endeavour to retake this position; they were the best of their cavalry. In the same proportion, the shock between this cavalry and ours was terrible; and one may judge of the fury with which both parties combated, when the enemy, in quitting the field, left it strewed with the dead of both parties. It was in the middle of this encounter, for ever glorious for the staff of the fourth corps, that the young Saint Marcelin de Fontanes was wounded. He was one of the first who entered the redoubt, and received on the nape of his neck a stroke from a sabre. In consequence of this wound, he was decorated with the cross of honour on the field of battle; a recompence the more flattering to him, as he was only old enough to entertain expectations of meriting it at some future period.

The interior of the redoubt presented a horrid picture to our sight. The dead were heaped on one another, from among which the cries of the wounded were feebly heard. Arms of every description were scattered over the field of battle;

the parapets, half demolished, had the embrasures entirely destroyed, and their places were distinguished but by the cannon, the greatest part of which were thrown down, and separated from the broken carriages. In the midst of this dreadful carnage, I discovered an apparently lifeless body of a Russian cannoneer, decorated with three crosses. It appeared to me to breath still. In one hand he held a broken sword, with the other he appeared to grasp the carriage of the cannon at which he had so valiantly fought.

All the Russian soldiers in the redoubt preferred perishing rather than yield : it would have been the same with the General that commanded them, if his valour had not saved him his life. This respectable soldier had promised to die or conquer at his post, and he would have kept his word ; for, being the only one surviving of the troop he commanded, he endeavoured to precipitate himself on our swords, where he would inevitably have met his death, had not the honour of such a prisoner arrested the cruelty of the soldiers. The Viceroy received him with complacency, and put him into the hands of Colonel Asselin, who conducted him to the Emperor.

The Viceroy's attention was taken up entirely by his centre, when it was called away to his left by a movement of cavalry directed by the

enemy on that point. General Delzons, who, ever since the morning, had been menaced by this cavalry, formed his first brigade into a square \* on the left of Borodino. Several times he saw himself on the point of being attacked ; but the enemy, seeing he could make no impression on him, advanced on the extremity of our left, and commenced a brisk attack on the Bavarian light cavalry, which were for a moment thrown into disorder. The Prince, who was at the moment on this point, threw himself into the middle of a square formed by the 84th, and prepared to set it in movement, when the cossacks were in their turn attacked ; who, taking to flight, disengaged our left, and every thing was restored to the greatest order.

The Prince did not cease to ride up and down, and to all points, exhorting every officer to do his duty, reminding them, that on this day depended the glory of France. Approaching to all the batteries, he gave his orders for the pieces to advance as the enemy retreated ; and, braving all dangers, he himself instructed the cannoneers how to direct their fire. It was thus that, inspecting all these perilous posts from the beginning of the day, his aid-de-camp, Maurice

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\* See the plan of the field of battle.

Mejean, received a wound in the thigh, and the equerry Bellisomi had his horse killed under him. His Highness having placed himself on the parapet of the grand redoubt with his officers, remarked from the embrasures all the movements of the enemy, paying no attention to the bullets that passed him from all quarters. Among the personages that composed his suite, was Colonel de Bourmont, whose great merit was only equalled by his rare modesty. This colonel, like all the other officers, had dismounted from his horse and was leaning on the pommel of the saddle, when General Guilleminot dropping something from his pocket, the colonel stooped to pick it up. This movement saved him his life; for at that instant a ball from a cannon struck his horse on the breast.

During this memorable day, the Emperor remained constantly in the rear of the centre, and, on the extremity of his right, made several grand manœuvres with the Westphalians and the Poles, that the Duke of Elchingen might execute with more facility the repeated and desperate attacks he made in endeavouring to turn the position of the enemy; but on this point the Russians repelled all our efforts with obstinacy, and retorted with interest on the Westphalians and Poles.

Although we had taken two redoubts, never-

theless the enemy still had a third, situated on another eminence, separated by a ravine. It was from thence, that establishing batteries well supplied, they continued with their fire to mow down our regiments, some of which were in covered paths, others behind the grand redoubt. We remained during several hours in this inaction ; the artillery vomiting from every side flames and death : and it was at this period that General Houard was killed by a grape-shot, while commanding the second brigade of the thirteenth division : brother in arms to General Plausanne, he perished the same day. United during their life, they were not separated in death ; for they were both interred on that field that had witnessed their gallantry.

The fourth corps, which ever since ten o'clock sustained with intrepidity the attacks of the enemy, was not the only one that had losses to deplore ; for, although the battle was not yet finished, there was not a corps that had not to mourn the loss of one or more of its chiefs. I should make too long a digression from my subject, were I to enumerate all the Generals that payed with their lives for the success of this brilliant action ; but there were some, who by their reputation merited the esteem of all the army, and, by that interest that brave men inspire, every

one venerated their memories, during the whole progress of their existence, and will talk over with pleasure the circumstances of their death. Among these last, I ought to cite General Augustus Caulincourt, who was killed in entering the grand redoubt, at the head of the 5th cuirassiers. Cut down in the flower of his age, he had witnessed more combats than years had passed over him. To the valour of a soldier, he united the urbanity of a man of the world ; informed, polished, sensible, noble, and generous : in short, he was endowed with all the qualities and all the virtues that belong to a French warrior. Besides Generals Plausanne and Houard, we had to deplore the loss of Generals of Brigade Compere and Marion, as well as General Count Lepel, aid-de-camp to the King of Westphalia, not forgetting, above all, the respect and tribute due to the manes of the intrepid Montbrun. We had for a long time felt that such a warrior must necessarily fall one day or other, so much did his valour expose him on the field of battle. Worthy successor of General Lassale, he died like him ; for, like him, he was an honour to our light horse. The number of Generals killed on this occasion amounted to as many as thirty, among which were the Generals of Division, Grouchy, Rapp, Compans, Morand, Desaix, Lahoussaye, &c.

Although the day was far advanced, the fate of many an unfortunate one was yet to be decided. The cannon still roared with unabated fury, and continued to strike its victims. The Viceroy, ever indefatigable, and unmindful of danger, was on every part of the field of battle, exposed to a shower of grape and bullets. This fire did not cease ; and, in the evening, it was so briskly maintained, that they were forced to order the division of the Vistula (General Claparede's division) to kneel down, posted behind the grand redoubt. We remained an hour in this uncomfortable position, when the Prince of Neuchatel, coming up, had an interview with the Viceroy, that lasted till near dark. Their discourse finished, Prince Eugene expedited different orders to his divisions, and the fire ceased. Then the enemy was more quiet, and only fired some few shot at intervals, and the silence of the last redoubt, gave us reason to believe that it was the intention of the Russians to retreat on the road to Mojaïsk.

The weather, that had been very fine during the day, towards the evening became cold and damp. All the army encamped on the ground it had gained. The Viceroy, who, since four o'clock in the morning, had not been off his horse, took his road behind the eminence occupied

by the royal guard, and where his Highness hoped to find his tent erected ; but his people having lost themselves, he and his household were obliged to accept the offers of General Lecchi, who could only give a supper without bread, and a tumbril for a bed, on which the Prince reposed. This encampment was most cruel ; neither men or horses having any thing to eat, and the want of wood exposed us to all the horrors of a Russian autumnal night.

The next day (8th September), very early, we returned to the field of battle. What had been foreseen the preceding evening had actually taken place. The enemy, seeing the intrepidity with which we carried his redoubts, despaired of holding his position ; and, during the night, resolved to evacuate it. It was here, in examining the field, that we could judge of the immense loss sustained by the Russians. In the space of a square league, there was not a spot but what was covered with killed or wounded ; there were places where the bursting of shells had overturned men and horses. These calamities, often repeated, had made such havoc, that heaps of slain were to be seen all over the plain ; and the few places where there were none, were covered with broken arms of all kinds ; as lances, muskets, cannon, casques, cuirasses, or with grape-shot,

as numerous as hailstones, after a violent thunder-storm. But the most horrid spectacle was the interior of the ravines ; almost all the wounded had taken refuge in them ; that is to say, all who could drag themselves there, in order to avoid the shot. It was here that these wretches, heaped one on the other, and bathing in their blood, invoked death at every instant, uttering the most horrid groans, and beseeching us to put an end to their misery.

While the cavalry pursued the enemy, the Viceroy ordered his engineers to destroy the redoubt ; and, as the fourth corps remained encamped on the field of battle, it was presumed we should remain there for the night. His Highness had ordered his household to establish themselves in the church of Borodino, the only building that had escaped the flames ; but it was filled with wounded, and the surgeons were employed in dressing and amputating. The equipages of the Prince, going to lodge in the village of Novoe, near the road to Mojaïsk, on the borders of the Kologha, were on the point of entering the castle, when some parties of cos-sacks rushed out, and obliged them precipitately to retreat.

In the mean time, the Viceroy being informed that the fifteenth division, returned from Witepsk,

had, at length, joined again their corps of the army, received orders to advance. Arrived at the village, beyond which was the redoubt, abandoned by the enemy, we left, on the right, the high road of Mojaïsk, and were followed by the corps of the centre, and went along the Kologha. On this march we were convinced that it would have been impossible to turn the right of the Russians, on the preceding evening. They had not only reserves on that side, but likewise several masked batteries along the river. Within half a league of the village of Krasnoë, we found again four great redoubts, that defended the road. They were, however, not finished.

Quitting the field of battle, we left, to maintain the position, a detachment of all the stragglers that could be picked up, under the orders of Colonel Bourmont. This difficult task was perfectly fulfilled by this officer, who, after destroying the enemy's works, came to join us a few days. All this time he lived amongst dead and dying, obliged to get provisions at a distance of more than five leagues, in the environs.

Whilst we were employed in taking up our quarters in the *chateau* of Krasnoë, a rumour was spread of the arrival of Napoleon. This news, however, was not confirmed. On a height

before us, we heard our sharp-shooters engaged with the cossacks. In one of the charges of the cavalry, Colonel Marboeuf was wounded at the head of his regiment.

The *chateau* of Krasnoë, and the village of this name, are situated near the Moskwa. The following day we crossed this river and on its left, we feigned an intention to attack Mojaïsk ; but the Viceroy, with his escort, advanced only to the suburbs. Here we saw this unhappy town all in flames. The inhabitants had fled, and our dragoons made only a few prisoners, found in the houses situated on this side of the river. Several batteries, established on an eminence beyond Mojaïsk, proved to us that we were masters of it. In truth, we learned that Napoleon had taken it, in consequence of a glorious engagement, and that the enemy, in burning the town, had not abandoned it till after a brave defence, leaving the streets and squares filled with dead and dying.

Our staff examined the environs of Mojaïsk, when the fourth corps, moving to the left, followed a high road, through a thick wood ; coming out of which we saw a tolerably good village, and further on we found a larger one, called Vedenskoë. On this delightful spot was a *chateau*, the furniture of which corresponded

with its external beauty ; but, in an instant, all was ravaged, without any other advantage than some thousands of bottles of wine, which were seized by the soldiers.

From Vedenskoë, turning to the right, we crossed a rivulet, close to a little village, and, pursuing a road full of briars, we arrived at a village, called Vrouinkovo, where we understood the head-quarters were to be. On entering it, we perceived on an eminence at a distance, some very neat houses, and four steeples, built with great symmetry. We were going to make a halt in this village, where abundance seemed to reign, when we understood that the fourth corps was to proceed to a town of the name of Rouza, the steeples of which were plainly perceived. Leaving Vrouinkovo, a number of peasants were seen, conducting carts, loaded with whatever was of most value to them. A sight so new to us excited our astonishment, and asking Colonel Asselin what could be the reason of this singular assemblage, he answered me as follows :

“ In proportion as our armies advanced into  
“ the interior of Russia, the Emperor Alexander,  
“ to favour the intentions of the nobility, and  
“ after the example of Spain, desired to make  
“ this a national war. According to this system,  
“ the nobility and the priests have, by money

“ and by exhortations, induced the peasants,  
“ their dependents, to rise against us. Of all  
“ the districts which have adhered to this system  
“ of defence, that of Rouza has shewn itself the  
“ most ardent to adopt it. The whole population,  
“ animated by their landlord, who had declared  
“ himself the chief of the insurrection, were or-  
“ ganized on military principles, and were ready to  
“ join the Russian army, as soon as they should  
“ receive the necessary orders.

“ Rouza being at a distance of five or six  
“ leagues from the high road, the inhabitants had  
“ flattered themselves we would not pass through  
“ their town, and, full of these hopes, they were  
“ secure and happy. What was their surprise,  
“ or rather their terror, continued the colonel,  
“ when I was sent by the Viceroy and presented  
“ myself with a dozen of Bavarian light horse  
“ before the town? You should have seen the  
“ peasants dismayed come out of their houses,  
“ put the horses to the same carts you now see,  
“ and driving them before them, fly with the  
“ greatest precipitation.

“ The men, however, who had been destined  
“ for the insurrection, collected at the voice of  
“ their lord, and, armed with poles, lances, and  
“ scythes, assembled on the place, and immedi-  
“ ately advanced towards us; but this timid

“ populace could not resist a few soldiers accus-  
“ tomed to fighting, and all took to flight. The  
“ chief alone evinced more firmness. He awaited  
“ us on the square, and, armed with a poniard,  
“ he menaced all those that summoned him to  
“ surrender. ‘ *How can I survive the dishonour*  
“ ‘ *of my country,*’ cried he, foaming with rage.  
“ ‘ *Our altars are no more! Our empire is dis-*  
“ ‘ *graced!* Take my life, it is odious to me!’  
“ We wished to calm him, and endeavoured to  
“ take his poniard from him: but he became  
“ more furious, and struck with it several of our  
“ soldiers, who then, giving themselves up to  
“ their vengeance, made him fall by the bay-  
“ onet.

“ This deed was scarcely done when the ad-  
“ vanced-guard of the fourth corps entered  
“ Rouza. On my recital,” continued the colo-  
“ nel, “ they immediately pursued the peasants  
“ who had fled with their effects and their cat-  
“ tle. They soon came up with them, and those  
“ you see here, are part of the runaways es-  
“ caped from Rouza. Go into the town,” added  
the colonel, “ and you will see a great many  
“ more of them.”

In proportion as we approached the town, we saw a great number of these carts brought back by horsemen. It was an affecting spectacle to see

these carts loaded with children and old people. It was heart-breaking to think that our soldiers would soon divide amongst themselves these carts and horses which constituted the sole fortune of these disconsolate families.

At length we entered Rouza, and saw a number of soldiers, who, in the very heart of the town, pillaged the houses, unmindful of the cries of the proprietors, or the tears of the mothers, who, to move them, in vain, presented their children on their knees, with uplifted hands, and bathed in tears, these innocent creatures begged only for their lives. This rage for plunder was justified in some, who, dying with hunger, only sought after provisions; others, however, under this pretence, plundered all, and even robbed the women and children of their clothes.

The Viceroy had arrived several hours with his staff only. He had left between the town and Vrouinkovo, the infantry divisions as well as the royal guards, who this day encamped behind us. We all indulged in our security, or rather in the disorder, which abundance, produces after long privations, when, all at once, some Bavarian light horse, who had been sent reconnoitring, returned at full speed, reporting that the cossacks, marching by squadrons, were advancing towards the town. It would be difficult

to describe the sensation produced by this news. The tranquillity we enjoyed, opposed to the imminence of the danger, was to us a most sudden transition from joy to the greatest uneasiness. “*The cossacks are here!*” cried one; “*There they come!*” cried another, quite aghast. “*What can we oppose to them?*” we asked one another. “*Nothing, except some wretches of soldiers, come here to plunder the peasants.*” This was, however, our only resource. They were immediately assembled in the square, but they were only about sixty in number, and half of them without arms.

The Viceroy, informed of the cause of this alarm, mounted his horse, and ordered his officers to follow him. We hastened out of the town, and entered the plain; but what was our surprise, when, instead of finding several squadrons, we only perceived about a dozen horsemen, and, at such a distance, that they were hardly to be distinguished. Some Bavarian light horse who were with us, advanced to reconnoitre them, and they reported that they were really cossacks. By their small number, and by their timid and reserved march, we could easily perceive that we had nothing to fear from their enterprises.

As these cossacks might have been detached by a considerable corps, the Prince thought it necessary to confirm the order he had given

already for some troops to advance ; but he modified it so far as to content himself with two battalions instead of the whole of the thirteenth division, which had at first been ordered. These two battalions encamping before Rouza dissipated our fears. Every one now returned quietly to his lodgings, where a good table and excellent wines made us soon forget the alarm we had experienced towards the close of the day.

The following day we remained at Rouza. The Viceroy profited by this repose, to make the chief of his staff draw up a circumstantial report of the famous battle of the 7th of September, in which the fourth corps had particularly distinguished itself.

Whilst the thirteenth and fourteenth divisions laid before the Emperor their titles to his benevolence, the fifteenth division, not less proved than all the rest, but deprived of the honour of fighting in the battle of the Moskwa, had likewise some claims to recompense, in consideration of the numberless hardships it had undergone in its expedition to Witepsk. This brave division, marching continually in marshy meadows, through deserted and ravaged villages, was always in bivouac and without provisions, and making the most painful routes to attack the enemy, who always fled on its appearance.

For near twenty days it was moving over fields which we had ravaged ; at length, worn out with hunger, fatigue, and disease, this unfortunate division, as well as its chief, who were worthy of a better fate, could not reach Borodino till the day after the battle. Its weariness, and especially the great losses it had sustained, obliged the Viceroy to leave it in reserve. It was the greatest proof of esteem which the Prince could give them by mixing it with the heroes of the royal guards, the greatest part of whom came from this division.

On quitting Rouza it was decided that this position should be maintained, being the more important on account of the abundance of provisions which were still to be found there ; and on account of a sort of castle, situated on a small eminence, surrounded with ditches, and which could serve for a refuge to the garrison, and guard them against a *coup de main*. This honourable command was given to Captain Maison Neuve, who well merited this confidence : for, during all the time of his mission, this brave and intelligent officer rendered himself useful to the army by his foresight, as well as by the wisdom he displayed in his dispositions.

## BOOK V.

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### *MOSCOW.*

AFTER the battle of the Moskwa, our triumphant army marched in three columns towards the capital of the Russian empire. Napoleon, impatient to get possession of it, pursued the enemy with his accustomed vigour, on the high road of Smolensko, while Prince Poniatowski, at the head of the fifth corps, marched on the right, by way of Kaluga. The Viceroy, commanding the fourth corps, continued on the left flank, and by the road of Zwenighorod, marched to Moscow, where the whole army was to assemble.

We could judge of the consternation that reigned in this capital, by the terror with which we inspired the country people. Our arrival in Rouza (9th of September), and the unmerciful manner in which we had treated the inhabitants, were no sooner known, than all the villages situated on the road to Moscow, were instantly

abandoned. Desolation was spread every where ; and many of those who fled, in a fit of despair, burnt their houses, *chateaux*, grain, and forage, which was scarcely gathered. All these unhappy beings, terrified by the fatal and useless resistance of the inhabitants of Rouza, threw down the pikes with which they had been armed, in order to facilitate their escape to the thick forests at a distance from the road, where they hid themselves, with their wives and children.

On approaching Moscow, we had entertained the hope that civilization, which enervates the soul, and especially an attachment to property, so natural to the inhabitants of large towns, would have induced the country people not to quit their habitations. We were convinced that the rapacity of our soldiers was only excited by the deserted state in which we found the villages. But the grounds about Moscow do not belong to the citizens of this large town ; they are the property of the lords who had declared against us, and their peasants, equally submissive as the slaves of the Nieper and of the Volga, obeyed the orders of their masters. They had been enjoined, on pain of death, to fly on our approach, and to hide in the woods whatever might be of use to us.

We perceived the execution of this fatal

measure on entering the village of Apalchtchouina. The houses were deserted, the castle abandoned, the furniture dashed to pieces, and the provisions wasted. Every thing presented an image of the most frightful desolation. All these ravages shewed us what excesses people can commit, when sufficiently magnanimous to prefer independence to riches.

Near Karinskoë, a village half way to Zwenighorod, where we had to go, the cossacks appeared. According to their custom, they made no stand against our advanced-guard, but contented themselves with observing us on our left, by marching on an eminence parallel to the high road. On the summit of this height, thickly set with birch, rose the grey walls and the steeples of an ancient abbey. At the foot of the hill stood the little town of Zwenighorod, built on the banks of the Moskwa. On this point the cossacks formed themselves into several bodies, and skirmished for some time with our light troops. Insensibly they were dislodged from their ambuscades, and we took post around Zwenighorod.

The abbey situated above this little town, commands the Moskwa. Its embattled walls, more than twenty feet in height, and from five to six feet thick, are flanked by four great towers, with embrasures. This edifice, constructed in

the thirteenth or fourteenth century, reminds us of the times, when the Moscovites, full of veneration for their priests, suffered the sacerdotal authority to take precedence of that of the nobles ; and when the Czar, on days of ceremony, marched before the patriarch of Moscow, holding the bridle of his horse. But these monks, so powerful and so formidable before the time of Peter I., were brought back again to the simplicity of the apostles, when this great monarch, on founding his empire, confiscated their property and diminished their number.

To form an idea of the changes produced by this reform, it was necessary to enter the abbey of Zwenighorod. At the sight of these great towers and high walls, we supposed the interior contained agreeable and commodious dwellings, and that we should find the monks living in the wonted abundance of all richly-endowed abbeys. A large iron gate, strongly barricadoed, confirmed us in the idea that this convent possessed quantities of provisions. We were going to force the entry, when an old man, whose flowing beard was whiter than his garment, came to let us in. He was desired to conduct us to the abbot. On entering the yard, we were greatly surprised to find that this vast edifice did not correspond with the high opinion we

had conceived of it; and that our guide, instead of introducing us into the apartments of the superior, conducted us to a small chapel, where we found four monks prostrated at the foot of an altar, constructed in the Grecian style. These venerable old men, when they saw us, on their knees, begged, in the name of the God whom they adored, that we would respect their church, and the graves of some bishops of which they were the faithful guardians. "By our "misery you may perceive," they answered by means of an interpreter, "that we can have no "treasures hid; and our food is so coarse, that "many of your soldiers would scorn to eat it; "we have no other fortune but our relics and "our altars; deign to respect them from a "regard to a religion so similar to your own." This we promised, and our assurance was confirmed on the arrival of the Viceroy, who lodged himself in this abbey, and thereby preserved the church and the convent, from the impending pillage.

While this asylum, formerly so peaceful, was a prey to the tumult unavoidable on such occasions, I perceived one of these pious monks, who, to conceal himself, took refuge in a cell almost under ground, the simplicity of which, presented nothing to excite our cupidity. This

friar, sensible of my attentions to him, rewarded them by acknowledging to me that he spoke French, and that he wished to have the pleasure of conversing with me. Charmed with his candour, I profited by it, to inform myself of every thing relating to the public spirit, and to the character of a nation, from whom we had conquered an extent of their country of more than two hundred and fifty leagues, without becoming acquainted with them. When I mentioned Moscow, he told me that it was the place of his nativity, and I perceived that deep sighs interrupted his speech. I judged by his silent grief that he mourned over the misfortunes to which this great capital was going to be exposed. I bewailed them with him ; but, curious to know the state of things there, when we were on the point of entering, I ventured at length to ask him for news concerning it.

“ The French have entered with great forces  
“ the territory of Russia,” said this venerable monk ; “ they come ravaging our beloved  
“ country, and they advance even towards this  
“ sacred city—the centre of the empire and the  
“ source of our prosperity ; but, unacquainted  
“ with our manners and our character, they think  
“ we shall bend under their yoke, and, obliged  
“ to choose between our homes and independ-

“ ence, we shall, in imitation of so many others,  
“ languish in their fetters, renouncing that na-  
“ tional pride in which consists the power of  
“ nations. No, Napoleon is mistaken; we are  
“ too wise, not to abhor his tyranny; and we  
“ are not sufficiently corrupted to prefer slavery  
“ to liberty. He hopes in vain to induce us by  
“ his numberless armies, to sue for peace. He  
“ does not remember, ours is a nation of No-  
“ mades. The great of our empire may, if they  
“ choose, cause whole districts to emigrate;  
“ desiring their peasants to fly into deserts, in  
“ order to escape the invasion; or, if necessary,  
“ to destroy towns and villages, rather than give  
“ them up to a true barbarian, whose domination  
“ is more dreadful to us than death itself.

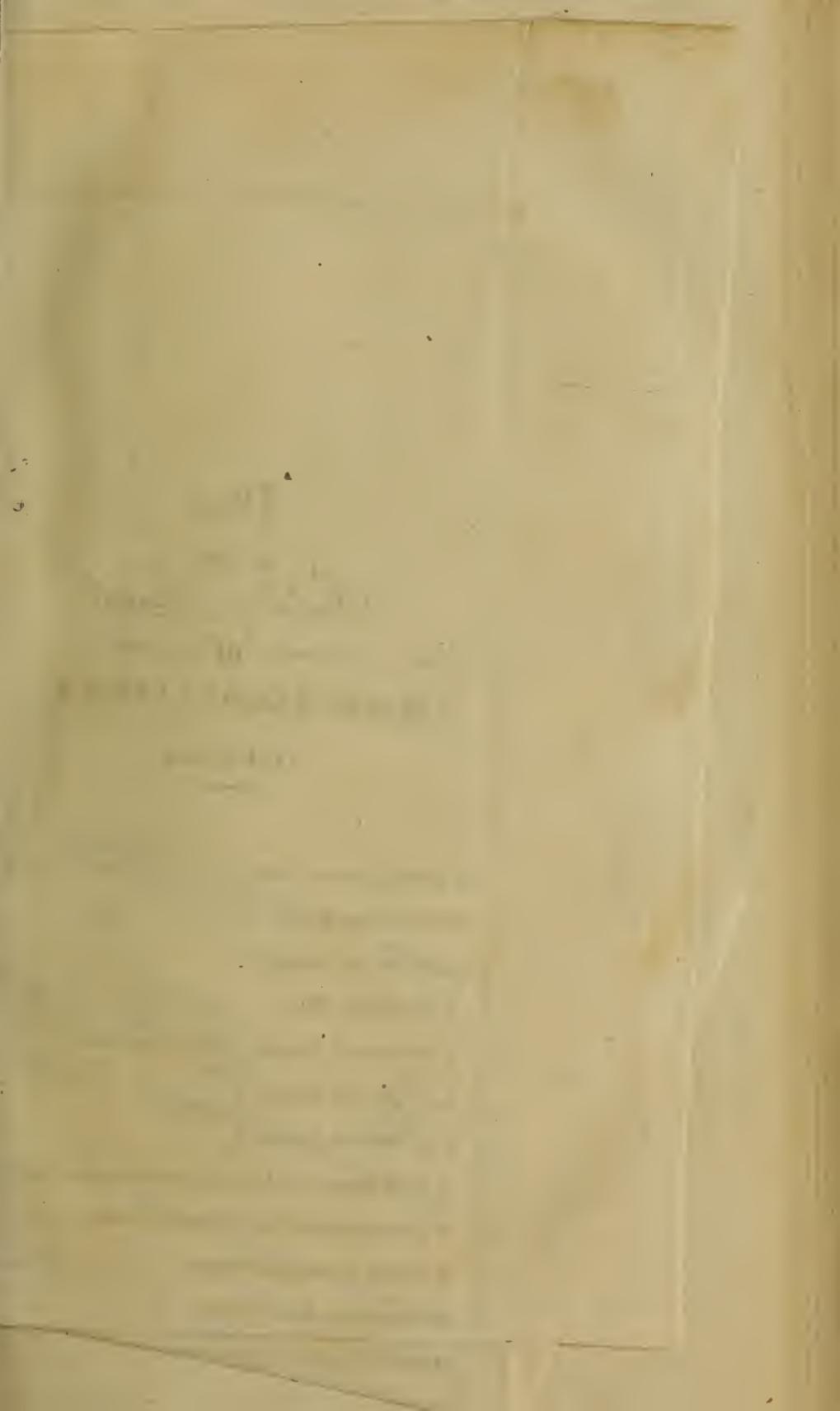
“ We are aware too,” added he, “ that Na-  
“ poleon relies a good deal on the dissensions  
“ which used formerly to divide the monarch  
“ and the nobles; but a patriotic love makes all  
“ ancient hatred to be forgotten. He flatters  
“ himself likewise, that he will be able to raise  
“ the people against the great. Vain efforts!  
“ the people are, from religious principles, obe-  
“ dient to their masters; nor will they confide  
“ in the glittering promises of him, who burns  
“ their huts, murders their children, devastates  
“ their country, and subverts their temples. Be-

“ sides, has not the whole of Europe witnessed  
“ striking instances of his baseness? Is he not  
“ a scourge to Germany, whose protector he  
“ pretends to be? Spain too, having trusted to  
“ the sincerity of his alliance, is become one  
“ vast burying-place! and the Pontiff, who  
“ crowned him, and raised him from a private sta-  
“ tion, to the first throne in the world, what re-  
“ ward has he received for that diadem? An  
“ ignominious captivity! And even your own  
“ country, which seems to have forgotten the  
“ race of St. Louis, for the sake of a foreigner,  
“ what advantages does she derive from her sub-  
“ mission? Incessant new taxes for the mainte-  
“ nance of courtiers, or to gratify the luxury of  
“ a family, insatiable in their pleasures. Inde-  
“ pendent of that, you have numberless pro-  
“ scriptions and secret executions. Your very  
“ thoughts are fettered, and whole generations  
“ are destroyed. Your mothers now deplore  
“ their fecundity. This,” said the venerable  
old man to me, “ this is the situation in which  
“ your tyrant has placed you; a tyrant, who is  
“ the more vain and odious, from having sprung  
“ from an obscure family, and who, having  
“ scarcely had one servant to wait on him, is now  
“ desirous that the whole universe should be  
“ laid at his feet, and that even kings should

" languish in his anti-room. If I was not  
" afraid to offend the majesty of the monarch  
" who loves us, as we love him, I should  
" make a comparison between your Emperor  
" and ours—but such a comparison would pro-  
" duce a shocking contrast, and would only  
" be putting crime in opposition to virtue."

Struck by the energy of this priest, whose strength of mind had suffered nothing from age, I remained silent; and being pleased with his candour, and grateful for the confidence with which he had honoured me, I thought I might be free with him, and derive some useful information from his conversation. "As you have just mentioned the Emperor Alexander," said I to him, "pray tell me what is become of him? Since our passage over the Wilna, we have never heard any thing of him. At Witepsk, Napoleon announced with much satisfaction at a public audience, that at Weliki-luki, this monarch had, like his father, been a victim to the treachery of his courtiers."

" He cannot have much greatness of soul," answered the old man, smiling, " who triumphs at the death of an enemy. But to prove to you the falsity of that report, and to shew you how much harmony exists during this critical moment, between all classes, and how beloved



Plan  
OR THE  
*Field of Battle,*  
—  
**MALO-JAROSLAVETZ.**

24 Oct<sup>r</sup>. 1814.

III Enemies Redoubts defended by 15 or 20 pieces of Cannon.

22 13<sup>th</sup> Division Delson's.

22 14<sup>th</sup> Division Broussier.

3 15<sup>th</sup> Division Pino.

4 Grenadiers & Chasseurs of the Royal Guard.

5 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Gerard.      } 1<sup>st</sup> Corps.

6 5<sup>th</sup> Division Compans.

7 Light Troops of the Royal Guard in Reserve

8 Light Cavalry of the 4<sup>th</sup> Corps in Reserve.

9 Cavalry of the Royal Guard.

10 Baggage of the 4<sup>th</sup> Corps.

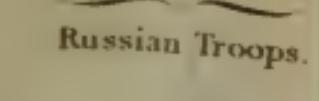
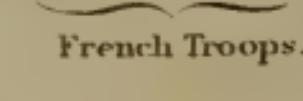
II French Troops of Observation.

12 Russian Divisions coming from the Camp.

13 Russian Divisions retiring upon Kaluga.

14 Advanced Guard of the Enemy approaching Malo-Jaroslavetz.

Distinctions between the French and Russian Troops.



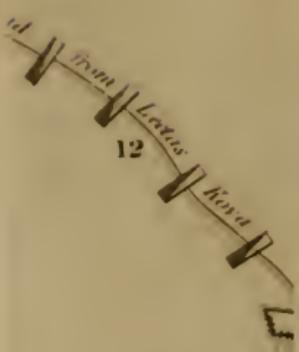
Scale of Eng<sup>s</sup> 1 2 3 4 500



Drawn on the times by the Author: 24<sup>th</sup> of October 1812.

C. Labanne

Thomson & Co. Bury St. Edmunds



" our sovereign is, I will read to you an authentic letter, which was sent to me from Moscow, a few days after Alexander arrived there from the army." At these words he took out the letter, translating it to me, as he went on reading.

" *Moscow, July 27.\**

" This day has added new lustre to our annals, and the remembrance of it will descend to the remotest posterity, as an eternal testimony of the patriotic spirit, the loyalty, and the attachment, which our illustrious nobility, and all other classes, feel for our sovereign. After a notification published in the evening, the nobility and the merchants assembled at eight o'clock on the following morning, at the palace Slobode, to wait the arrival of our most gracious sovereign. Notwithstanding the cause of this meeting had not been communicated before-hand, every one attended full of loyal feelings towards the father of their country. The silence which reigned in this

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\* The translation of this letter having appeared in the French journals, we give it here as it was published in the *Moniteur*,

“ grand assembly, proved clearly their unity,  
“ and their disposition to submit to any sacri-  
“ fice. When the manifesto of His Imperial  
“ Majesty was read in presence of the governor,  
“ as chief of Moscow, calling on every one to  
“ defend his country against an enemy, ‘ who,  
“ ‘ with craft in his heart, and seduction on his  
“ ‘ lips,’ had brought irons and indissoluble  
“ chains for Russia, the illustrious posterity  
“ of the Pojarskies, and of their equals, ani-  
“ mated by the most ardent zeal, immediately  
“ testified their readiness to sacrifice their for-  
“ tunes, and even their lives; and resolved that  
“ levies should be made in the government of  
“ Moscow, to form an interior army, *viz.*, ten  
“ men out of a hundred, which should be armed  
“ to the utmost of their ability, and provided  
“ with clothing and nourishment. The mani-  
“ festo being afterwards read in the assembly of  
“ the merchants, this body were animated by the  
“ general zeal, resolving that there should be  
“ levied on each of them, a sum proportionate  
“ to their respective fortunes, in order to contri-  
“ bute to the interior armament. But not yet  
“ satisfied, a considerable part of this body were  
“ desirous of making still further sacrifices. They  
“ asked leave to open a voluntary subscription  
“ for that purpose, and in less than an hour, the

" subscription amounted to more than one million and a half of roubles.

" Such was the disposition of those two bodies, when his majesty, who had attended divine service at the church of the palace, appeared amongst the nobles. The emperor told them, in a short speech, that he considered the zeal of the nobility as the firmest support of the throne; and, having at all times, and under all circumstances, shewn themselves the guardians, and faithful defenders of the integrity and glory of their beloved country, he deigned to give them a short sketch of the state of military affairs, which required extraordinary measures of defence. When he was informed of the unanimous result of the assembly of the two bodies, who were going to furnish, to clothe, and to arm, at their own expense, eighty thousand men for the defence of Moscow, he condescendingly received this new proof of attachment to his person, and of love to the country, with the feelings of a father who loves his children, and is proud of their courage. With an overflowing heart he exclaimed, ' I did not expect less, you have fully confirmed my opinion of you.'

" Afterwards his Imperial Majesty deigned to proceed to the saloon where the merchants

“ were assembled, and being informed of the zeal  
“ they had shewn both in the resolution of levy-  
“ ing a sum on the whole body, as well as  
“ making an extraordinary subscription of a  
“ million and a half of roubles, His Majesty ex-  
“ pressed his gracious satisfaction in terms, dic-  
“ tated by wisdom, which were accompanied by  
“ general exclamations of ‘ We are ready to  
“ ‘ sacrifice to our father, not only our fortunes,  
“ ‘ but our lives.’ These were the words of the  
“ descendants of the immortal Minin. The  
“ scene of that morning requires the pen of a  
“ new Tacitus, and the pencil of a second  
“ Apelles to do justice to the picture, repre-  
“ senting the monarch, the father of his country,  
“ glowing with kindness, receiving from his  
“ surrounding children, the sacrifices which they  
“ were offering at the altar of their country.

“ May our enemy be informed of all this!  
“ May that proud man, who trifles with the  
“ fate of his subjects, learn it and tremble! We  
“ shall all march against him. We are guided by  
“ religion, and by loyalty for our sovereign and  
“ country. We shall either perish together, or  
“ be victorious.”

After having read this letter, the pious friar told me that the Archmandrit Platon, Archbishop of Moscow, notwithstanding his advanced and

decrepid age, watched still in the spirit, praying for the welfare of the sovereign and the empire, and that he had just sent to his Imperial Majesty the precious image of Saint Serge, Bishop of Radouegue. The monarch, added he, accepted this sacred relic and made a present of it to the army of Moscow, hoping that they would be safe under the protection of this saint, who shielded once, by his benediction, the victorious *Dmitri Douskoi*, in his combat against the cruel *Mamaï*.

This is the letter of his Eminency Platon, dated from the Abbey Troitsa\*, July 26th.

“ Moscow, the capital of the empire, the new  
“ Jerusalem, receives Christ like a mother, in  
“ the arms of her zealous sons ; and perceiving,  
“ through the mist which is raised, the brilliant  
“ glory of his power, she sings joyfully, Hosannah,  
“ praised be he who is arrived ! Let the arrogant  
“ and shameless Goliath, bring from the limits  
“ of France, to the confines of Russia, the terrors  
“ of death ! Peaceful religion, this sling of the  
“ Russian David, will soon fell his sanguinary  
“ pride. I offer this image of Saint Serge, ancient  
“ defender of our country’s happiness, to your  
“ Imperial Majesty’s acceptance.”

Astonished at this custom, so different from ours, I asked whether it was really true, that the

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\* About fifteen leagues distance from Moscow.

Emperor Alexander had given this standard to his soldiers. "I am so certain of it," answered the venerable ecclesiastic, "that it would be "sacrilegious to doubt it. Letters from "Moscow have informed us, that the Bishop "Augustin, vicar of that capital, having united "all the troops in the town,\* sang a *Te Deum*, "and gave them the image of Saint Serge; after "which he preached a sermon, which excited "the tears of the whole congregation. We have "ourselves witnessed, under the walls of that "abbey," said he, "the militia, going to the "battle of Moscow, and carrying with veneration that sacred standard; marching to the "combat like true Christian soldiers, who are "devoted to their religion, their country, and "their Prince. These feelings were expressed "in their faces; their eyes emitted a heavenly "joy, at the thought of fighting the enemy. Every "warrior, even those who had but just entered "the service, felt the same fire and valour as the "old soldiers, shewing an unlimited submission "to their chiefs, and to discipline, which is the "duty and the sign of a good soldier. The "country people, who saw them pass by, implored from the bottom of their hearts, the

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\* Saturday, August 17th, or, according to our calendar, August 29th, which, as is well known, anticipates the Russian twelve days.

" protection of heaven for these brave men who  
" came out of the ancient capital of Russia,  
" which in former times, with her own forces  
" laid the insolent enemy in the dust, who came  
" in ignorance to destroy it."

Quite surprised at all the extraordinary things which this good old man had communicated to me, I felt the greatest respect for people who were so sublime in their misfortunes ; and I was convinced that a nation must be invincible, which is thus firm in her morality, and who, not being dismayed at the sight of danger, finds her own preservation, in the preservation of her principles.

The following morning we left the abbey very early. In retiring from it, I looked behind, and saw the first rays of the rising sun gild the summit of those high walls, which had been erected to be an asylum of peace, but which, after our departure, became a prey to unmanageable brigands. I ruminated on these painful thoughts, and, taking a road parallel with the Moskwa, I observed that they had been erecting, before Zwenigorod, bridges over the river, probably with a view to open a communication with the grand army, who marched on the opposite shore, towards Moscow.

We continued near the course of the Moskwa, when the cossacks appeared again, manœuvring

just in the same manner as the night before. Under Aksinino, they tried for an instant to stop the Bavarian light horse ; but, finding some of their men wounded, they fled in disorder, retiring somewhat beyond the Moskwa, which we crossed under the village Spaskoë. The river being but shallow on that point, both men and horses easily swam over. The cossacks, who expected us at the entrance of a wood, dispersed, when they saw that the bar had been overstepped which separated them from us. From thence we continued marching till we reached Buzaievo, which place contains only the post-house, and, on a very steep eminence, a castle, surrounded by woods, in which Prince Eugene lodged.

The following morning (September 14th), desirous of getting to Moscow, we set off very early, and only met with deserted villages. There were some magnificent castles, situated on the shores of the Moskwa, on our right ; but the cossacks took care to pillage them, in order to deprive us of the only comforts those spots could afford us. The corn, ready for harvest, had either been trodden down, or eaten by the horses. The hay-stacks, which covered the country, were sacrificed to the flames, spreading all around an impenetrable smoke. When we at last reached the village of Tscherepkova, our cavalry still marching, the Viceroy went on an

eminence on our right, to ascertain if Moscow could be seen, this being the object of all our wishes; for we considered it as the end of our fatigues, and the term of our expedition. Several hills hiding it still from our view, we perceived nothing but clouds of dust, which, from being parallel with our road, indicated the march which the grand army had taken. A few cannon-shots, fired at a distance, and with long intervals, made us think that our troops were approaching Moscow, without experiencing much resistance.

When we descended from that eminence, we heard dreadful cries. A troop of cossacks, issuing from a neighbouring wood, had in their accustomed manner, charged upon our chasseurs, endeavouring to stop the march of our van guard. But our brave fellows, far from being intimidated by this unexpected attack, met courageously those vain efforts by which a powerless horde tried to impede our entrance into the capital. These were the last struggles of a desperate courage, and the Russians, beaten and dispersed, were obliged to fly towards the Kremlin, as they had before done on the shores of the Kologha.

We distinguished, at a distance, and amidst the dust, long columns of Russian cavalry, all marching towards Moscow, but all retiring behind the town, the nearer we approached it.

Whilst the fourth corps were constructing a bridge to cross the Moskwa, the staff went about two o'clock on a high hill, from whence we perceived a thousand round and gilded steeples, which, the rays of the sun shining on them, appeared at the distance as so many flaming globes. There was indeed a globe placed on the summit of a pillar, or an obelisk, which had quite the appearance of a balloon, suspended in the air. We felt the greatest delight at this beautiful sight, which was the more amusing to us, from the contrast it formed to the dismal objects which we had hitherto seen. Nor could any of us suppress our joy; and, actuated by a spontaneous feeling, we all exclaimed, *Moscow! Moscow!* At the sound of this wished-for name, crowds ran up the hill, discovering every instant new wonders. Some admired a magnificent castle on our left, which was built in an elegant oriental style; others directed their attention towards a palace or a temple; but all were equally struck with the greatness of the picture which this immense town presented to us. It is situated in the middle of a fertile plain; the Moskwa is seen running through rich meadows, and after having fertilized the fields, it takes its course through the middle of the town, separating an immense cluster of houses, built of

wood, stone, and bricks, partly constructed in a gothic, and partly in a modern, style, uniting the different species of architecture, peculiar to each nation. The walls, variously painted, the domes, covered with lead, gildings, and slates, represented the most pleasing variety; whilst the terraces before the palaces, the obelisks over the town-gates, but, above all, the steeples, presented to our eyes the reality of one of those celebrated towns in Asia, which till now had appeared to us to exist in the powerful imagination of the Arabian poets.

We were still contemplating this fine sight, when we perceived a well-dressed man coming towards us, through a bye-way from Moscow. Every one ran immediately to meet him, and actuated by suspicious motives, we thought already of making him pay dearly for his imprudent curiosity. But the calmness with which he addressed us, and the fluency with which he spoke our language, and, above all, the impatience with which we expected to hear some tidings from Moscow, made us all listen to him with pleasure and interest:

“ I am not come here,” said he, “ to spy into  
“ your manœuvres, nor to give you false infor-  
“ mation ; I am an unfortunate merchant,  
“ ignorant of every thing which relates to the

“ war ; and, notwithstanding my being one of its  
“ victims, I have not inquired into the motives  
“ which have induced our sovereigns to begin  
“ it. Your Emperor has this day, about noon,  
“ entered Moscow, at the head of his invincible  
“ legions ; but he has found only a deserted  
“ town. Some men, who have escaped from  
“ prison, and some vile prostitutes, are the only  
“ creatures who interrupt its solitude. Hasten  
“ to stop their excesses, if possible ; liberty  
“ having been granted them, only in hopes, that  
“ all the crimes which they are going to commit,  
“ will be laid to the charge of the French army.  
“ Being aware of the misery which we have  
“ to expect, I came here to look amongst you  
“ for a man, sufficiently generous to protect my  
“ family ; for, notwithstanding the orders of our  
“ government, I cannot consent to quit my  
“ house, and to lead a rambling miserable life  
“ in the woods. I prefer applying to French  
“ generosity, and to look for a protector amongst  
“ those, who have been till now, represented  
“ to us as our most cruel enemies. The great of  
“ our empire, deceived by savage and de-  
“ structive politics, will most likely irritate  
“ your loyal feelings, in causing the whole  
“ population to emigrate, and to leave nothing  
“ but a deserted town, which might afterwards

" be sacrificed to the flames." Every one interrupted him here, saying, that it was impossible a nation could thus cause their own ruin, from an uncertain hope of involving their enemy in it.

" It is but too true that they have been taking  
" such a resolution," said this unhappy man,  
" and if you persist in disbelieving it, you must  
" know that Count Rostopchin, governor of  
" Moscow, quitted it yesterday. When he  
" went away, he charged the very outcast of  
" human beings to assist his revenge : how far  
" he will carry it I do not know ; but I tremble  
" when I remember that he has threatened  
" several times to burn Moscow, if the French  
" should approach it. Such a barbarity must  
" seem atrocious and even incredible to you, if  
" you did not know what a degree of hatred  
" your unheard-of victories have inspired in the  
" nobility. They know that the whole of Eu-  
" rope is under your domination, and, from a  
" feeling of pride, they had rather destroy their  
" native country, than see it subjugated.  
" If the nobility, who are ashamed of their  
" defeat, had not meditated the ruin of the  
" capital, why should they have fled with all  
" their property ? and why have the merchants  
" too been forced to follow them, carrying away  
" with them their goods and their treasures ?

“ why, lastly, have no magistrates remained in  
“ this desolated town, who could implore the  
“ mercy of the conqueror? They have all fled,  
“ and by that means they seem to excite your  
“ soldiers to every excess; for the legal au-  
“ thorities, by abandoning their posts, have  
“ abandoned every thing.”

This unfortunate Moscovite shed bitter tears whilst speaking. To calm his grief we promised him what he asked, and we endeavoured to comfort him by dissipating his fears, which were but too well founded, with regard to the fate of his unhappy country. We questioned him as to the direction in which the Russians retreated; what they had done since the battle of Moscow, and, lastly, what was become of the Emperor Alexander and his brother Constantine? He answered all our questions in the most satisfactory manner, which confirmed the intelligence communicated to me by the friar in Zwenigorod. This unhappy man becoming more composed, and being secretly flattered by the agreeable surprise caused us by the sight of Moscow and its environs, he consented to my request to give us some details of a town, the conquest of which promised to crown all our hopes. He expressed himself as follows:

“ Moscow, built in the Asiatic style, has five

" enclosures, one within another; the last,  
" comprising the town and its suburbs, may  
" have about thirty werstes \* in circuit, but  
" the fourth circumference, being that of the  
" town only, and which is called *Semlaingorod*,  
" has but twelve. The suburbs, or *slobodes*,  
" are thirty in number. In winter, the popula-  
" tion amounts to three hundred thousand  
" souls; on the commencement of the fine sea-  
" son, when many retire to the country, this  
" number diminishes one third. The high  
" towers, and the embattled walls, which you  
" see rising in the midst of the town, trace the  
" first enclosure, called *Kremlin*. This fortress,  
" which has the form of a perfect triangle, is  
" famous in our annals, and has never been  
" taken. † The plan of it was given, towards  
" the fourteenth century, by some Italian ar-  
" chitects. ‡ The interior of the *Kremlin* is

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\* Seven leagues.

† The people of Moscow believed that the preservation of the empire depended on the towers of this ancient fortress. An incorrect tradition persuaded them that it never had been taken. Thus, to express the idea of security, it was a common saying, *to be as safe as within the Kremlin*.

‡ Voltaire's *Histoire de Russie*, vol. I. p. 50, stereot. edition.

“ divided into two parts ; the one called *Krepots*,  
“ or citadel, contains only the government  
“ buildings, and some churches, each of which  
“ is surmounted by five domes. From this place  
“ you may distinguish them perfectly well, as  
“ much by their elevation as by the gilding of  
“ the steeples and their fantastical architecture.  
“ In the second enclosure are fine houses, com-  
“ mercial streets, and the place known by the  
“ name of *Bazar*, or *Khitaigorod*, which was  
“ given them by the Tartars, who were its  
“ founders. Foedor, elder brother of Peter  
“ the Great, began to improve Moscow. He  
“ constructed several buildings of stone, with-  
“ out any regular architecture. It is to him we  
“ owe the first stud of fine horses, and some  
“ useful embellishments.\* Although Peter  
“ had a particular affection for Petersburg, ne-  
“ vertheless, his all-comprising genius did not  
“ neglect Moscow. He had it paved, and he  
“ adorned it with superb edifices ; he enriched it  
“ by manufactures ; and, lastly, under Elizabeth,  
“ a university was established. † The arsenal  
“ within the krepots is remarkable for six cul-  
“ verins, mounted on fixed slides, the longest

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\* Voltaire's *Histoire de Russie*, vol. I. p. 52.

† *Idem.*

" of which is twenty-four feet in length. Besides this, there is, near the principal gate, an enormous howitzer, at least three feet in diameter. Further on is the ancient palace of the Czars ; it is the residence of our Emperors : yours has now established himself there. Behind is the palace of the Senate ; close by this building is the cathedral of St. Iwan ; near that is the foundation of an ancient tower, with the famous bell which was cast in Moscow, towards the middle of the sixteenth century, under the Czar Boris Godono. It is an astonishing production, which proves, that even at that remote period, the Russians had made great progress in the fine arts, and towards civilization. This bell, justly admired for the beauty of the figures on its surface, surpasses in size the most famous in Europe.\*

" From the krepots you enjoy a delightful prospect. On the right and left are two bridges, built across the Moskwa; beyond the river stand magnificent palaces ; and in the back-ground is a fine landscape, embellished with country seats."

But, said I, interrupting the Moscovite, tell us what immense fabric is this with an infinite

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\* Voltaire's Histoire de Russie, tom. I. p. 51,

number of windows on each side, and which, by its great bulk, seems to command the whole town?

" It is the hospital Sheremitow," answered he, " built by the illustrious family of that name. One of their ancestors was the glorious companion in arms of Peter the Great; and the riches he acquired, were always devoted to the prosperity and glory of the nation. In this building were educated the orphans and the children of those who defended the country. Now the children have disappeared, and their fathers only remain, who, to the number of twenty thousand, have been gloriously wounded at Mojaïsk. These unhappy men are abandoned, death is before their eyes, and if your generosity cannot in this moment of calamity come to their assistance, they will have nothing left but to die in the most frightful torments.

" From the gates of Petersburg to those of Kaluga, numbers of palaces are seen, which by their riches, and by their magnificence, attract the attention of the traveller. All these palaces are newly constructed, and announce the prodigious wealth which Russia has accumulated within these few years. But the most astonishing of all, is the palace

" of Orlow, which belongs to the only heiress of  
" this name, whose income exceeds six millions  
" of roubles.\* The extent of this palace is im-  
" mense, and the beauty of the interior cor-  
" responds with that of the outside, and with  
" the spacious courts and enchanting gardens.  
" You will find in my country," added this  
inhabitant of Moscow, " likewise, a great  
" number of edifices, justly famous for being  
" the most beautiful in Europe. It is useless to  
" describe them to you, since you will see them  
" soon yourself. Ah! may you admire them  
" long! but a fatal presentiment tells me, that  
" this great and superb town, justly considered  
" as the market of Europe and of Asia, will  
" confound the world by the most dreadful  
" catastrophe."

With these words, this unfortunate man seemed suffocated with grief. I pitied him. However, I could not part with him, without asking the name of that great building of red and white brick, which was seen to the north of the town, on the road to Petersburg. He informed me, that it was the famous *chateau* of Peterskoë, where the sovereigns of Russia used to reside during the days which preceded their coronation.

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\* One million sterling.

Although the bridge to be built over the Moskwa was not yet finished, the Viceroy ordered the troops of his corps to cross the river; the cavalry had already passed it, and had taken post before the village of Khoreehevo. It was here, that we were officially informed of the entry of our troops into Moscow. The fourth corps received orders to halt here till the following day, when an hour should be appointed for us to enter the capital of the Russian empire.

On the 15th of September, early, our corps left the village where it had encamped, and marched to Moscow. On our approach to this town, we saw that it had no walls, and that a simple parapet of earth was the only work which constituted the outer enclosure. Till now nothing indicated that the town was inhabited; and the side on which we arrived was so lonely, that we saw neither Russian or even French soldiers. No cry, no noise was heard, in the midst of this awful solitude; anxiety alone conducted our steps, and it doubly increased, when we perceived a thick smoke, which, in the form of a column, arose in the centre of the town. It was at first believed, that the Russians, agreeably to their custom, had, in retreating, set fire to some ma-

gazines. However, recollecting the recital of the inhabitant of Moscow, we conceived a fear that his prediction was perhaps going to be fulfilled. Greatly interested to know the cause of this fire, we in vain endeavoured to find somebody who could quiet our anxious curiosity, and the impossibility to satisfy it, by increasing our impatience, augmented our alarm.

We did not enter at the first barrier that presented itself, but, moving to the left, we continued to march round the town. At length, according to the orders of the Viceroy, I put the troops of the fourth corps in position, to guard the high road to Petersburg. Thus the thirteenth and fifteenth divisions, encamped around the *chateau* of Peterskoë, the fourteenth established itself in the village between Moscow and this *chateau*, and the Bavarian light cavalry was a league in front of this village.

When these positions were taken, the Viceroy entered Moscow and took his lodgings in the palace of Prince Momonoff, in the fine street of St. Petersburg. This quarter, assigned to our corps, was one of the finest in the town. It was composed entirely of superb edifices, and of houses which, although of wood, appeared to us to be of surprising grandeur and riches. The

magistrates having abandoned the town, their palaces were open to every body : thus the subaltern officer was lodged in vast apartments richly decorated, and of which he could fancy himself to be the master, since nobody appeared but a humble and submissive porter, who with a trembling hand delivered to him the keys of the house.

Although Moscow had been entered by some of our troops the preceding day, so extensive and so deserted was the town that no soldier had yet penetrated into the quarter which we were to occupy. The most intrepid minds were moved by this loneliness ; the streets were so long that from one extremity to the other, our horsemen could not recognize one another. They were seen advancing with caution ; then, struck with fear, took to flight, though they were all fighting under the same banners. In proportion as a new quarter of the town was taken possession of, reconnoitring parties went on to search the palaces and the churches. In the first were only found old men, children, and Russian officers, who had been wounded in the preceding battles : in the latter, the altars were decorated as if for a festival ; a thousand lighted tapers, burning in honour to the saint protector of the country, attested that the pious Moscovites had

not ceased to invoke him till the moment of their departure. This solemn and religious display contributed to make powerful and respectable a people whom we had conquered, and filled us with that terror which is the offspring of injustice. With cautious steps we proceeded in the midst of this awful solitude, often stopping to look behind us. And sometimes, struck with fear, we listened with the greatest attention ; for the imagination, frightened at the magnitude of our conquest, made us apprehensive of snares in every place. At the least noise, our troubled minds thought to hear the clashing of arms, and the cries of the wounded.

However, on approaching towards the centre of the town, especially in the neighbourhood of the Bazar, we began to see some inhabitants assembled around the Kremlin. These deluded beings, deceived by a tradition, had thought this citadel inviolable, and had attempted the preceding day to defend it for an instant against our valiant legions. Dismayed by their defeat, they contemplated, in tears, those high towers, which till then they had considered as the *palladium* of the safety of their town. Proceeding further on, we saw a number of soldiers, who publicly sold and bargained a vast quantity of objects which they had stolen ; for it was only

at the great magazines of provisions that the imperial guards had placed sentinels. Approaching nearer, the number of soldiers multiplied ; they were seen in great bodies, carrying on their backs pieces of cloth, loaves of sugar, and whole bales of merchandize. We did not know to what to attribute this shocking disorder, when some fusileers of the guards informed us at length, that the smoke which we had seen on entering the town, proceeded from a vast building, full of goods, called the Exchange, and which the Russians had set on fire on their retreat. “ Yesterday,” said these soldiers, “ we entered the town about twelve o’clock, and towards five, the fire manifested itself; we endeavoured at first to extinguish it, but we soon learnt that the governor had sent away the engines : it is also believed,” added they, “ that this fire, which cannot be subdued, has been kindled by the nobility, with an intention to destroy our conquests, and to ruin the merchants who opposed the abandonment of Moscow.”

A natural curiosity made me proceed. The more I advanced towards the place on fire, the more its avenues were obstructed by soldiers and beggars carrying off goods of all sorts ; despising the less precious, they threw them away. Thus were the streets in a short time covered with

merchandise of every description. I penetrated at length into the interior of the Exchange ; but, alas ! it was no more the building so renowned for its magnificence ; it was rather a vast furnace with burning beams falling on all sides. Under the piazzas alone it was possible to go about ; numerous warehouses were to be found there, in which the soldiers broke the chests, and divided the spoil, which exceeded all their expectations. No cry, no tumult was heard in this scene of horror ; every one found wherewithal to satisfy his thirst for plunder. Nothing was heard but the crackling of the flames, and the noise of the doors that were broke open ; till all at once a dreadful crash was occasioned by the falling in of a vault. Cottons, muslins, in short the most costly productions of Europe and of Asia, burnt with the greatest violence. In the cellars were accumulated sugar, oil, vitriol ; all these objects consumed at once in subterraneous warehouses, sent forth torrents of flame through thick iron grates, which presented a striking image of the gates of hell. It was a spectacle both terrible and affecting, for even the most hardened minds must be struck with a conviction, that so great a calamity would some day call forth the divine vengeance upon the authors of such crimes.

The informations which I endeavoured to ob-

tain, with regard to the causes of this fire, were very unsatisfactory ; but in the evening, returning to the palace where our staff was quartered, I met there a Frenchman who had been tutor to the children of Prince ——. This gentleman possessed a great deal of knowledge, and a sound judgment in politics. His conversation was the more desirable, as he had lived a long time among the Russian nobility, and was perfectly acquainted with their principles. Moreover, the events which happened in Moscow since the battle of the Moskwa, had transpired in his presence ; and, although a Frenchman, he was one of the small number of those, who, by their talents and wisdom, had always been on a footing of intimacy with Count Rostopchin. This meeting was extremely fortunate, as it gave me an opportunity of learning what I was so desirous to know ; particularly with respect to the character of the governor, who, notwithstanding the blackest calumnies, will always be revered by his fellow-citizens, and will be cited by future generations as a model of courage and patriotic virtue.

“ Although the French advanced towards Moscow in three columns,” said the tutor, “ so much prudence was employed by Count Rostopchin, in concealing the truth from the people, that none but the nobility, and the

" persons attached to the government, were  
" acquainted with the terrible disasters which  
" threatened the town. This, it is true, contrib-  
" uted to confirm our ignorance; but when  
" we saw the Russian army return within these  
" walls, preceded by thirty thousand wounded,  
" and dragging after them the whole population  
" of the country around, then the citizens  
" renounced their peaceable occupations, and  
" abandoned themselves to the utmost agitation.  
" All societies were dissolved, and the pub-  
" lic institutions deserted. Mechanics even  
" renounced the work that gave bread to their  
" families, shut their shops, and, partaking of  
" the public sorrow, mixed with immense crowds  
" that were running to the governor's, to know  
" whether to fly or stop.

" In this painful and critical situation, the  
" governor, surrounded by the most illustrious  
" of the nobility, and by the richest and most  
" estimable among the merchants, reminded his  
" illustrious citizens of the solemn promises  
" which they had made to their Emperor. He  
" recalled to their minds that memorable scene,  
" when the sovereign, the father of the country,  
" received from his children, the homage of  
" their fortunes and their lives. At this recol-  
" lection, Count Rostopchin, greatly affected

“ by the sentiments which agitated him, felt  
“ himself suffocated from an excess of sensi-  
“ bility, and lost the faculty of speech; this silent  
“ scene lasted several minutes, and produced  
“ more tears than the most eloquent harangue  
“ would have done. But the interest of the  
“ state, subduing a sensibility so natural, a  
“ nobleman in the assembly, who, from his  
“ diplomatic functions, was well acquainted  
“ with the motives that had excited this disas-  
“ trous war, addressed them in the following  
“ words:

“ ‘ Inhabitants of Moscow! if you knew the  
“ ‘ sufferings of the paternal heart of our monarch,  
“ ‘ and the means he has employed to insure the  
“ ‘ repose and happiness of his empire—if you  
“ ‘ knew even how much his love of peace, and  
“ ‘ the maintenance of a generous alliance, have  
“ ‘ made him neglect the interests of his glory—  
“ ‘ then you could form an adequate idea of  
“ ‘ that model of a prince, who told us, about  
“ ‘ six weeks ago, ‘ I have neglected nothing to  
“ ‘ ensure the peace of this country; but the more  
“ ‘ sacrifices I made, the more were demanded  
“ ‘ by our enemy: for our justification in the eyes  
“ ‘ of posterity, we must avow that we have  
“ ‘ taken up arms, only in the utmost extremity;  
“ ‘ and at the moment when our glorious em-

“ ‘ pire has been placed between the infamy of  
“ ‘ having its laurels blasted, and the chances of  
“ ‘ a war. But, since injustice forces us into  
“ ‘ it, why should we fear it. For more than  
“ ‘ a century past, war has always turned in our  
“ ‘ favour, and has always contributed to our  
“ ‘ glory. Fatal disorder of the human mind !  
“ ‘ Anciently, the north was the terror of the  
“ ‘ south ; and now, when the north approaches  
“ ‘ to civilization, and aspires to universal paci-  
“ ‘ fication, the south, blinded by an ungovernable  
“ ‘ fury, abandons its rich provinces, to oppress  
“ ‘ our frozen regions. Is it then always neces-  
“ ‘ sary to be the oppressor, in order not to be  
“ ‘ oppressed ? and must my pacific sentiments  
“ ‘ be now the misfortune of my reign ? In vain  
“ ‘ this plague of the world alleges, that he  
“ ‘ makes war, *dictated by politics*, and that  
“ ‘ this is the struggle of civilization against  
“ ‘ barbarism ! a clumsy snare, which he uses  
“ ‘ to deceive those who are unacquainted with  
“ ‘ our manners and principles. This so vaunted  
“ ‘ civilization, what has it to fear from us,  
“ ‘ who exhaust our treasures, who cross the  
“ ‘ seas, and go to the two hemispheres, to  
“ ‘ obtain and naturalize it in our climates.  
“ ‘ And those to whom we go for instruction,  
“ ‘ and who enrich themselves by selling us

“ ‘ the productions of their industry, these very  
“ ‘ people dare call us barbarians ! No, no, this  
“ ‘ is not the motive for the war made upon us  
“ ‘ by the ungrateful Napoleon ; he fears our  
“ ‘ rapid progress, more than our barbarism.  
“ ‘ In fact, what nation is virtuous enough, not  
“ ‘ to be jealous of the miraculous protection,  
“ ‘ which God grants to our empire. It is  
“ ‘ scarcely a century, since Peter, of illustrious  
“ ‘ memory, placed it in the rank of the great  
“ ‘ powers ; and since that time, what nations have  
“ ‘ been subdued, what provinces submitted, and  
“ ‘ fortresses taken !—But no, let us rather  
“ ‘ consider as trophies, the towns that have been  
“ ‘ founded, the districts that have been civi-  
“ ‘ lized ; the universities, colleges, and institu-  
“ ‘ tions, which have been established ; and you  
“ ‘ will find, that in a short space of time, we  
“ ‘ have removed the line which separated the  
“ ‘ civilized part of Europe, from the barbarian.  
“ ‘ It is our spirit of civilization, so conformable  
“ ‘ to that of which the French are so vain,  
“ ‘ which now attracts their hatred. They re-  
“ ‘ proach us for our conquests over the Persians  
“ ‘ and Turks, feigning not to know, that it is  
“ ‘ from the terror with which we inspire the  
“ ‘ Mussulmen, that Europe ceases to be invaded  
“ ‘ by these infidels. Hungary owes to us its

“ ‘ safety, and Italy its preservation ; far different, in this respect, from our enemies, whose conquests are always a new subject of war and discord with their neighbours.’

“ This is the sense of the memorable words, which the Emperor Alexander pronounced in the assembly of the nobles ; and which the orator thought it incumbent upon him to repeat, in order the more to electrify the minds of those who had not been present. Count Rostopchin, who hitherto had listened with silent attention, seeing that the inhabitants of Moscow were sufficiently prepared rose spontaneously from his seat, and going to the balcony, which looked on the great square, he thus addressed the people there assembled :

“ ‘ BRAVE MOSCOVITES !

“ Our enemy advances ; we already hear the cannon roar near our suburbs. This bad man wants to overthrow a throne, the splendour of which eclipses his own. We have ceded ground, but we are not conquered. You know, our Emperor, in imitation of his ancestors, resides in the camp. Our armies are almost in contact, and are reinforced every day with new levies ; but those of our perfidious enemy, arrive exhausted and annihilated. Insensible man ! he thought that his

“ ‘ victorious eagle, after having wandered from  
“ ‘ the banks of the Tagus, to the sources of the  
“ ‘ Volga, could subdue one, which, reared in  
“ ‘ the midst of the Kremlin, has taken a swift  
“ ‘ flight, extending over our heads, one wing  
“ ‘ towards the pole, and reaching with the other  
“ ‘ beyond the Bosphorus.’

“ ‘ Let us be persevering, and, I venture to  
“ ‘ assure you, that our country, from the midst  
“ ‘ of its ruins, will reappear greater and more  
“ ‘ majestic than before. But, to attain such a  
“ ‘ desirable end, consider, my friends, that we  
“ ‘ must make great sacrifices, and renounce our  
“ ‘ dearest affections. You must now prove  
“ ‘ yourselves worthy emulators of the Pojarskies,  
“ ‘ the Palitsires, and of the Minines, who, in  
“ ‘ the most unhappy times, have established by  
“ ‘ their courage, the belief that the Kremlin is  
“ ‘ sacred. Keep up this pious tradition, and  
“ ‘ maintain it, by arming yourselves against the  
“ ‘ dangerous enemy, who wishes to annihilate  
“ ‘ our empire, and to pillage our altars. Sacrifice  
“ ‘ every thing to obtain a victory, or else you  
“ ‘ will lose your honour, your fortunes, and your  
“ ‘ independence. But if God, by his heavenly  
“ ‘ wrath, will allow vice to triumph for a mo-  
“ ‘ ment, remember that it will be your sacred  
“ ‘ duty to fly into the deserts, leaving a

“ country which will not be yours any longer,  
“ when the presence of your oppressors has pol-  
“ luted it. The inhabitants of Saragossa, having  
“ still the immortal courage of their ancestors  
“ before their eyes, who, to escape the yoke of  
“ the Romans, lighted a pile, and immolated  
“ their fortunes, their families, and themselves,  
“ have, like them, preferred to be buried under  
“ the ruins of their town, rather than submit to  
“ injustice ; the same tyranny is now threaten-  
“ ing to crush us. Well, shew then to the  
“ whole universe, that the glorious example of  
“ the Spaniards has not been lost upon the  
“ Russians.’

“ After this speech the most violent agita-  
“ tion succeeded, and an ungovernable popu-  
“ lace, running through the principal streets,  
“ called out aloud that it was better to perish  
“ than to outlive one’s country and religion.  
“ Those who had not been gifted by nature with  
“ courage, went to their homes to save their fami-  
“ lies from danger ; some fled with haste from the  
“ town ; others, on the contrary, vowed to defend  
“ it ; whilst the rest of the population took up  
“ arms, hiding themselves in the Kremlin, or,  
“ with torches in their hands, burned the Ex-  
“ change, which contained, as you know, im-

"mense riches, and where the French army might  
have found means to subsist during the winter."

This was the account which the worthy tutor gave me of all that had happened at Moscow, till our arrival there. We both lamented so many unhappy events; but the day being very calm, we hoped that no other building would have suffered from the fire at Moscow but the Exchange. But what were our feelings when we saw, on the following morning, with the dawn of day (September 16), that the fire raged on all sides, and that the wind, blowing with violence, spread the flames in every direction.

The most heart-rending scene which my imagination could ever have conceived, even at reading the most afflicting accounts in ancient and modern history, now presented itself before my eyes; a great part of the population of Moscow, frightened at our arrival, hid themselves in the interior of their houses; they were now leaving those asylums, when the fire penetrated them. These trembling wretches, without uttering the least imprecation, brought out from their hiding-places their most precious effects; others, of greater sensibility, entirely given up to the feelings of nature, saved nothing but their children, who were clasped in their arms; old

people, borne down by grief rather than by age, could hardly follow their families, and many of them, lamenting the ruin of their country, expired near the houses in which they were born. The streets, public places, and particularly the churches, were filled with these unhappy people, who were lying on the remains of their furniture, suffering even without a murmur. Neither crying nor quarrelling were heard ; both the conqueror and the conquered were equally hardened ; the one from excess of fortune, the other from excess of misery.

The fire, which continued its ravages, had soon reached the finest parts of the town : All those palaces which we had admired for the elegance of their architecture, and the taste of their furniture, were buried in the flames ; their magnificent fronts, ornamented with bas-reliefs and statues, losing their supports, fell with a dreadful crash on the fragments of their pillars ; the churches, though covered with iron and lead, fell likewise, and with them those beautiful steeples, which we had seen the night before, resplendent like gold and silver ; the hospitals too, which contained more than twenty thousand wounded, soon began to burn. This occasioned a most revolting and dreadful scene ; almost all those poor wretches perished, and a few

who still lingered, were seen crawling, half burnt, amongst the smoking cinders ; others again, groaning under heaps of dead bodies, lifted up their heads, with difficulty, endeavouring to catch a glimpse of light.

But how shall I describe the tumultuous proceedings, when permission was granted to pillage this immense city ! Soldiers, sutlers, galley-slaves, and prostitutes, were running through the streets, penetrating into the deserted palaces, taking away every thing which could gratify their avarice. Some were covering themselves with stuffs, worked in gold and silk ; others, without any discrimination, placed rich and costly furs upon their shoulders ; several others dressed themselves in women's and children's pelisses, and even the galley-slaves concealed their rags under splendid court-dresses ; the rest crowded into the cellars, and forcing open the doors, drank the most costly wines, and carried off immense booty.

This horrible pillage was not confined to the deserted houses alone, but extended to those which were inhabited, thus facilitating to the plunderers, devastations equally great with those occasioned by the conflagration. All the asylums were soon violated by impudent soldiers ; those who had officers in their houses might, perhaps,

have flattered themselves to escape the general calamity. Vain illusion ! the fire, progressively increasing, soon destroyed all their hopes.

Towards evening, when Napoleon did not think himself any longer safe in a town, the ruin of which seemed unavoidable, he left the Kremlin, and established himself, with his suite, in the castle at Peterskoë. When I saw him pass by, I could not behold, without abhorrence, the chief of a barbarous expedition, who endeavoured to escape the just marks of public indignation, by seeking the darkest road ; but in vain :—from all sides the flames seemed to pursue him, and, extending over his guilty head, reminded me of the torches of the Eumenides, pursuing the criminals who were destined to the Furies !

The generals likewise received orders to quit Moscow. Licentiousness then became boundless; the soldiers being no longer restrained by the presence of their chiefs, committed every kind of excess. No retreat was now safe, no place sufficiently sacred to shield against their rapacious searches ; but nothing could more forcibly excite their avarice than the church of St. Michael, being the sepulchre of the Russian Emperors. An erroneous tradition caused the belief that it contained immense riches. With

these hopes, some grenadiers entered it, and descended, with torches, into vast subterraneous vaults, to disturb the peace and silence of the tombs. Instead of treasures they found nothing but stone coffins, covered with pink velvet, and with very thin silver plates, on which were engraved the names of the Czars, and the days of their birth and decease. Mortified at this disappointment, they again went through the subterranean vaults, where they perceived, at the end of a dark gallery, a lamp, the half-extinguished light of which fell on a small altar ; they went immediately up to it, and the first object which presented itself to their notice, was a young female, elegantly dressed, and in the most religious attitude. At the noise of the soldiers, the unhappy girl screamed grievously, fell in a swoon, and was carried, in that situation, before one of our generals.

While I have life I shall recollect the effect which that young lady's appearance amongst us, pale, and almost dying, produced on my mind ; her afflicted looks were truly interesting, and she appeared to curse the hand which endeavoured to recall her to life. Pure minds were moved by her fate, and wished most ardently to become acquainted with the history of this interesting victim ; the general, in particular, but from very

different motives, seemed also very curious to hear it ; and sending most of those away who were present, he begged the young lady to relate to him her misfortunes.

“ Of what use,” said she, “ would it be to mention to you the wealth of a house, which will soon be annihilated ? suffice it, that the name of my father is celebrated in the history of our empire, and that he is still, himself, serving with distinction in the army, which is now fighting for their country. My name is *Paulowna*. On the day preceding your entrance into Moscow, I was going to be united to one of the young warriors, who had distinguished himself at the battle of Mojaïsk. But amidst the nuptial solemnities, my father was informed that the French were at the gates of the town, and, suspending our marriage, and taking away my husband with him, they went to join the army. Early on the following morning, being together with my afflicted family, we heard the cannons ; and, the noise approaching nearer and nearer, we did not doubt any longer that we must quit Moscow. During this extreme bustle, I fled with my relations, and when we arrived near the Kremlin, an immense crowd met us, and

“ approaching us hastily, they parted me from  
“ my mother and sisters. I endeavoured, in  
“ vain, to recall them by my cries ; the noise of  
“ arms, the bustle of an infuriated populace,  
“ overpowered my voice, and made me in that  
“ instant the most miserable of all. The  
“ French, meanwhile, penetrated into the town,  
“ and making every one fly before them, they  
“ advanced towards the Kremlin. To find a  
“ shelter against their excesses, I was drawn  
“ on, with many more, into the citadel, which  
“ was considered a place of security for us. As  
“ I could not mix with the combatants, I  
“ retired to the church of Saint Michael, seek-  
“ ing peace amongst the graves of the Czars.  
“ Kneeling near their sepulchres, I invoked the  
“ manes of those illustrious founders of our  
“ country, when on a sudden, some wicked  
“ soldiers broke in upon my retreat, and  
“ dragged me away from an inviolable and  
“ sacred asylum.” When the unhappy girl  
had finished her history, she shed a torrent of  
tears, and throwing herself at the general’s feet,  
she implored him to respect her virtue, and to  
send her back to her relations. He was more  
interested by her beauty than by her tears, but,  
pretending to pity her misfortunes, he en-  
gaged to relieve them, offering her his house

as a shelter ; and in order to retain her, he promised to use all his power to find out her father and her destined husband.. But as I knew the disposition of the man, I clearly perceived, that this apparent generosity, was only a snare to deceive the innocent Pau-lowna, and he wanted nothing more to fill up the horrors committed on that day, but to outrage virtue and seduce innocence ; thus, neither noble blood, nor the candour of youth, nor even the tears of beauty, were respected.

Penetrated by so many calamities, I hoped that the shades of night would veil that dreadful picture, but they contributed, on the contrary to make the conflagration more visible ; for the violence of the flames, which extended from north to south, being agitated by the wind, produced furrows on the sky, which was darkened by a thick smoke. But nothing could equal the anguish which absorbed every heart, and which was increased during the dead of the night, by the cries of the miserable wretches who were murdered, or by the screams and groans of young females, who were seeking protection from their sympathising mothers, and whose ineffectual struggles tended more to inflame the rage of their persecutors. To those dreadful groans, and heart-

rending cries, was added, the howlings of the dogs, which, being chained to the doors of the palaces; according to the custom at Moscow, could not escape from the fire which surrounded them. I flattered myself that slumber would disperse from my mind these revolting scenes; but, instead of sleep, frightful recollections crowded upon me, and recalled all the horrors of the evening. My fatigued senses seemed at last going to repose, when the light of the extensive conflagration, piercing into my room, awakened me suddenly, and made me think it was daylight. I thought that my room was a prey to the flames. This was no idle dream, for, when I approached the window, I saw our quarters on fire, and the house in which I lodged, was on the point of being burnt. Sparks were falling into our yard, and on the wooden roof of our stables. I ran quickly to my landlord and family; perceiving their danger, they had already quitted their habitation, and retired to a subterraneous place, which afforded them more security. I found them all assembled there, with their servants; and they would not leave it, for they dreaded our soldiers, as much as the fire. The father alone, was sitting on the threshold of the door, and appeared desirous of appeasing, by the

sacrifice of his own life, the ferocity of those barbarians, who advanced to insult his family. Two of his daughters, quite pale, with dishevelled hair, and whose tears, added to their beauty, disputed with him the honour of the martyrdom, and I succeeded but by violence, to snatch them away from the asylum, under which they were all going to be buried. These unhappy beings, when they again saw the light, contemplated with indifference the loss of all their wealth, and were astonished, that they were still alive. Notwithstanding they were at last convinced that they should not be hurt, they did not exhibit any tokens of gratitude for it ; but, like those wretches, who, having been sent for execution, remain quite bewildered, if they are pardoned ; the agonies of death thus making them insensible to the gift of life.

Desirous of terminating the recital of this horrible catastrophe, for which history wants expressions, and poetry colours, I shall pass over in silence many circumstances revolting to humanity, and merely describe the dreadful confusion which arose in our army, when the fire had reached all the parts of Moscow, and the whole town was become one immense flame.

Through a thick smoke, a long row of carriages were perceived, loaded with booty. Being

too heavy, they were obliged to stop at every step, when we heard the cries of the conductors, who, fearing the flames, endeavoured to push forward, with dreadful howlings. Every where armed people were seen, who forced open the doors, even if they were leaving the place, for fear of having left one house untouched. Some, having coaches heavily laden, carried the rest of their booty on their backs. The fire, however, obstructing the thoroughfare of the principal streets, obliged them often to return from whence they came. Thus wandering from one place to another, through an immense town, which they did not know, they sought, in vain, a favourable track, which might lead them out of this labyrinth of fire. A great number removed from, instead of approaching towards the gates, through which they might have gone out, thus falling victims to their own rapacity. But, notwithstanding this extreme danger, the love of plunder induced them to brave it. The soldiers, stimulated by an ardent desire of pillage, ventured into the middle of burning vapours. They walked in blood, treading upon dead bodies, whilst fragments and burning coals fell on their murderous hands. They would probably all have perished if an insupportable heat had not forced them at last to withdraw into their camp.

The fourth corps having received orders to leave Moscow, we proceeded (September 17th) towards Peterskoë, where our divisions were encamped. At that moment, which seemed to be the dawn of day, I witnessed the most dreadful and the most affecting scenes possible : namely, the unhappy inhabitants dragging upon some mean vehicles, all that they had saved from their burning houses. The soldiers, having taken from them their horses, men and women were drawing those carts, which contained sometimes a sick mother, or a paralytic old man. Half naked children followed these interesting groups. Affliction, to which their age is commonly a stranger, was impressed on their features, and, when soldiers came near them, they ran crying into the arms of their mothers. Alas ! what habitation could we have offered them which would not constantly recall the object of their terror ? Without either a shelter or any assistance, this unfortunate people wandered about in the fields, and fled into the woods ; but, wherever they bent their steps, they met the conquerors of Moscow, who frequently ill-treated them, and sold before their eyes, some of those goods which they had taken away from their own deserted habitations.

## PART II.

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### BOOK VI.

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#### *MALO-JAROSLAVITZ.*

THE arrival of a victorious French army in the ancient capital of the Czars, in the richest and most central city of Russia, which a religious belief had considered until then as sacred, was one of the most extraordinary occurrences of modern history.

Our former conquests had, for some years, accustomed Europe to witness all our vast and surprising campaigns crowned with success. But, of all our expeditions, none of them had such an appearance of imposing grandeur as this ; and the difficulty of the enterprise equalled all that the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans, had conceived the most prodigious. The distance from

Paris to Moscow, nearly equal to that which separated the capital of Alexander from that of Darius ; the situation of the places, and rigour of the climates, which had been hitherto supposed inaccessible to the armies of Europe ; the recollection of Charles XII., who, wishing to attempt a similar project, did not dare to pass Smolensko ; the terror of the Asiatic nations, astonished to see the people who had fled before us arrive amongst them ; in short, all concurred to give to the progress of the grand army, an air of wonder, which recalled to our recollection the most admired expeditions of antiquity.

Such was the aspect of our conquests, when taken in the most brilliant point of view ; but, when sound reason taught us to look into futurity, nothing presented itself but the darkest and most melancholy colouring. The frightful extremity to which the inhabitants of Moscow had been reduced, proved to us that we had no means of treating with a people determined to make such great sacrifices ; and, that the vain glory of signing a treaty of peace at Moscow, had lighted a fire, the ravages of which would spread themselves throughout Europe, and would give to the war a character so sanguinary, that it could only end in the entire ruin of a generous people, or by the fall of that evil genius, whom God, in his

anger, seemed to have created to chastise mankind, by making use of him as a new exterminating angel.

The wisest and most judicious witnessed, with terror, the destruction of a city, which, within five days, had become a prey to the flames, and the light of which illuminated our camp every night. We saw no prospect of a speedy termination of the war, even had we still continued our conquests; for, after the ruin of Moscow, we should have attempted that of Petersburg. And, even if we had subdued all Russia, we might still have anticipated an expedition to the Euphrates and the Ganges. Alas! when a sovereign possesses only a rash valour, which is not tempered with wisdom, the brilliant lustre of his arms renders him like those dangerous meteors which occasionally appear on the earth, and excite the most serious alarm.

Although the ruin of Moscow was a great loss to the Russians, nevertheless this loss was still more sensibly felt by us, since it ensured to our enemies all the advantages which they had promised themselves from the rigour of their climate. In vain did we represent to the inhabitants that the burning of this capital was useless, and that the French army ought to rejoice at being relieved from an immense population, who

might have spread dangerous seditions ; but, after much reflection, I feel convinced that the Russian government had reason to fear, from the crafty character of our chief, that this same population, far from revolting against us, might have become, on the contrary, instrumental to our projects, and that the majority of the great, led away by so dangerous an example, or seduced by brilliant promises, might have abandoned the interests of their country.

It was, doubtless, to prevent this calamity, that the Count Rostopchin sacrificed the whole of his fortune in burning Moscow, thinking that this great example would be the only means of rousing the energies of the nobility, and, by rendering us the objects of their execration, would animate the people to that violent hatred which would induce them to revolt against us. Besides, this city being provisioned for eight months, the French army, by occupying it, would have been able to wait the return of spring, and then renew the campaign, with the armies of reserve which were encamped at Smolensko, and on the Nien-men; whilst, by burning Moscow, they would force us on the contrary to a precipitate retreat, in the middle of the most rigorous season of the year.

Having thus calculated, their hopes were not without foundation ; for our formidable army

though it arrived in the fine season, had lost the third part of the men, merely by the rapidity with which they marched ; and the enemy had no reason to fear that we could take up any position, since our want of discipline had made a desert of all our conquests, and our improvident chief had formed no plan to facilitate our return.

In short, to finish this picture of our distresses, in the midst of our apparent victory, the whole army was discouraged and fatigued with marching. The cavalry was nearly ruined, and the artillery-horses, exhausted by bad food, could no longer draw the field-pieces. Although we have been the deplorable victims of the burning of Moscow, nevertheless, to do justice to the inhabitants, we cannot but admire their generous devotedness to their country, and must acknowledge that they have, like the Spaniards, raised themselves, by their courage and perseverance, to that high degree of true glory which characterizes the grandeur of a nation.

When we call to mind the sufferings we have endured, and the losses we experienced by fatigue alone, previous to our arrival at Moscow,\*

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\* The fourth corps, when we set out from Glogau, consisted of about forty-eight thousand men, and when we left Moscow, there were but twenty thousand infantry, and two

and at a time too when the earth, covered with its choicest productions, offered us abundant resources, one can scarcely conceive how Napoleon could be so blind and obstinate as not to abandon Russia ; particularly when he saw that winter approached, and that the capital, on which he had so much depended, no longer existed. It appears as if divine Providence, to punish him for his pride, had deprived him of reason ; since he presumed to think, that the same men who had had sufficient courage to destroy their country, would afterwards be weak enough to accept his hard proposals, and sign a treaty of peace under the smoking ruins of their city. Those who possessed the least foresight, predicted our misfortunes, and imagined that they read on the walls of the Kremlin, those prophetic words which an invisible hand traced before Nebuchadnezzar, in the midst of his greatest prosperity :—

*“ Thine empire shall pass into other hands ;  
“ thou shalt be driven from amongst men ; and  
“ thou shalt live in exile, until thou rememberest  
“ that the Most High has an absolute power*

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thousand cavalry. The fifteenth division, consisting of thirteen thousand men at the commencement of the campaign, was then reduced to four thousand.

"over kingdoms, and gives them to whom he  
"pleases."

During the four days (17, 18, 19, and 20, September,) that we remained near Peterskoë\*, Moscow never ceased burning. In the meantime, the rain fell in torrents; and the houses near the *chateau*, being too few in number for the great multitude who were encamped there, rendered it almost impossible to obtain shelter: thus men, horses, and carriages, bivouaced in the middle of the fields. The staff-officers, placed around the *chateaux*, where their generals resided, were established in the English gardens, and quartered under grottos, Chinese pavilions, or green-houses, whilst the horses, tied under acacias, or linden-trees, were separated from each other by hedges, or beds of flowers. This camp, truly picturesque, was rendered still more so by the new costume adopted by the soldiers; most of whom, to shelter themselves from the inclemency of the weather, had put on the same clothing which they had formerly seen at Moscow. Thus we saw, walking in our camp, soldiers dressed à la Tartare, à la cosaque, à la Chinoise; one wore the Polish cap, another the

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\* This imperial *chateau*, of which we have already spoken, is but a quarter of a league from Moscow.

high bonnet of the Persians, the Baskirs, or the Kalmouks. In short, at this time, our army presented the image of a carnival ; and from what followed, we had reason to say, that our retreat, which commenced with a masquerade, ended with a funeral.

But the abundance which the army then enjoyed, made them forget their fatigues ; with the rain on their backs, and their feet in the mud, they consoled themselves with good cheer, and the advantages which they derived from trafficking in the articles stolen from Moscow. Although it was forbidden to go into the city, the soldiers, drawn there by the hope of gain, betrayed their trust, and continually returned loaded with provisions and merchandise. Under the pretence of going on marauding parties, they returned near to the Kremlin, and dug amongst the ruins, where they discovered entire magazines, from whence they drew a profusion of articles of every description. Thus our camp no longer resembled an army, but a great fair, where each soldier, metamorphosed into a merchant, sold the most valuable articles, at an inconsiderable price ; and although encamped in the fields, and exposed to the injuries of the weather, by a singular contrast, he ate off China plates, drank out of silver vases, and possessed the richest and most ele-

gant commodities of life, which luxury could invent.

The neighbourhood of Peterskoë, and its gardens, at length became as unhealthy as it was inconvenient. Napoleon returned to establish himself at the Kremlin, which had not been burnt, and the guards and staff-officers received orders to re-enter the city (the 20th and 21st of September). According to the calculations of the geographical engineers, the tenth part of the houses still remained ; which were divided according to the quarters, between each of the corps of the grand army. They gave us the same that we had before, which was the faubourg of Petersburg.

We were not much troubled this time about choosing our quarters. On re-entering the city, we experienced the most heart-rending sensations, when we perceived that no trace remained of those fine hotels where we had formerly been established : they were entirely demolished, and their ruins, still smoking, were in so much disorder, that we could no longer distinguish the outline of the streets. The stone palaces were the only buildings which preserved any traces of what they had been : standing alone amidst piles of ruins, and blackened by smoke, this wreck of a new city resembled the remains of antiquity.

Each one endeavoured to find quarters for himself, but rarely could we meet with houses which joined ; and, to shelter some companies, we were obliged to occupy a vast tract of land, which only offered habitations here and there. The churches, less combustible than the other buildings, having still preserved their roofs, were transformed into barracks and stables. Thus the hymns and holy melodies, which had formerly resounded within these sacred walls, now gave place to the neighing of horses, and the horrible blasphemies of the soldiers.

Curious to know in what state I should find the house where I had lodged, I sought for it in vain, until a neighbouring church, being still in existence, enabled me to ascertain it. In the state in which I saw it, I scarcely recollect it ; it was entirely burnt, there only remained the four walls, which were full of chinks, owing to the fierceness of the fire. I was reflecting on the terrible effects of this element, when the unfortunate servants belonging to the house made their appearance from the bottom of a vault. Become thin from the effects of misery, I should doubtless have found their features much altered, if the ashes and smoke had not rendered them, at that moment, totally unknown to me : they appeared to be spectres. But what were my

sensations on beholding, amongst these miserable wretches, my former host, concealed under the rags which he had borrowed from his domestics : they now lived all together, so much had misfortune equalised conditions ! On seeing me, he could not refrain from shedding tears, particularly when he presented to me his children, half naked and dying with hunger. Although his grief was silent, it made a deep impression on my mind ; and, by the signs of this unfortunate man, I comprehended that the soldiers, after having plundered his dwelling whilst it was burning, had also deprived him of the clothes which he wore. This distressing picture touched me to the heart ; I wished to alleviate his sorrows, though I feared I had only barren consolation to offer him ; but the same man who a short time before had given me a splendid repast, accepted with gratitude a morsel of bread.

Although the population of Moscow had entirely disappeared, nevertheless there still remained many of those unfortunate beings whom misery had accustomed to look on all occurrences with indifference. Some of these took shelter in cabins which they had themselves constructed in gardens or public walks, with planks half burnt, which they had collected from the ruins. There were also a number of unfortunate girls, and

these were the only individuals who derived any advantage from the plunder of Moscow ; for the soldiers eagerly received them, and when they were once introduced into our houses, they soon became mistresses of them, and squandered away all that the flames had spared. There were others of them who really merited our regard by their education, and above all by their misfortunes ; since, shocking to relate, hunger and misery often obliged their mothers to come and present them to us. This immorality, under such circumstances, must recoil on those who had not sufficient prudence to resist such temptations. It is a painful reflection, that the power which mothers thus gave us over their daughters, was the dreadful effect of a public calamity.

Of all these victims, the most to be lamented, and the most worthy of pity, was the unfortunate Paulowna, whose history I have already related, and who, deceived by an apparent generosity, had been weak enough to place unlimited confidence in the general who had received her. This man well knew how to deceive his innocent captive, by his assiduities and false pity, and by feigning sentiments which he never knew ; aware of the improbability of discovering Paulowna's parents, he made her believe that she would find in him a friend and protector. On

the faith of repeated promises, this innocent female, after having spent several days in mourning and tears, became a victim to the artifices of her ungenerous lover ; for, alas ! the general was already married, and she who had expected to become his wife, found herself only a dishonoured slave.

There still remained at Moscow a class of men, who were the most contemptible of all, since they escaped the punishment due to their former crimes by consenting to commit still greater ; these were the galley-slaves. During the whole time of the conflagration at Moscow, they signalledised themselves by the audacity with which they executed the orders which they had received : provided with phosphorus, wherever the fire appeared to be extinguished they lighted it again, and even crept slyly into the houses which were inhabited, in order to set fire to them. Several of these abject wretches were arrested torch in hand ; but their too sudden punishment produced little effect (24th September). The people who always detested their conquerors, considered these executions as the effect of our political calculations ; in short, these victims were too obscure for the expiation of such a crime ; and above all, their trial wanting preparation, threw no light on this great event,

and could not justify us clearly in the eyes of the world.

When we entered Moscow, the Russian troops fell back on the grand road of Wladimer; but the greater part of their army having descended the Moskwa to go to Kolomna, took up their position along the river. It is said that this very army, followed every where by the population in tears, a few days after our arrival, passed under the walls of Moscow while the city was still burning; it was illuminated by the light of the fire; and the wind, blowing with violence, even carried into the ranks some of the ruins of their capital, reduced to ashes. In spite of so many evils, these troops observed the greatest order, and kept a profound silence: such resignation, in sight of so melancholy a picture, gave to this march an imposing and religious air.

At the time when the main part of the Russian army had taken different positions, the lords of the provinces in the neighbourhood of Moscow, perceiving that the disasters of the war had highly exasperated the people, availed themselves of it to stir them up, and arm them against us. Many raised levies at their own expense, and put themselves at the head of their insurgent peasants. These forces, united to the cossacks, intercepted our convoys on the great roads. But

the principal aim of these military preparations was to harass our foragers, and above all, to take from them all the resources which they could still procure from the neighbouring villages.

In digging under the ruins of Moscow, they often found magazines of sugar, of wine, or of brandy. These discoveries, although they would have been precious in happier times, were no great relief for an army which had consumed all the vegetables of the country, and who would, in a short time, have neither bread or meat to eat. Our cattle perished for want of forage, and to procure others, it was each day necessary to engage in combats, always disadvantageous to us ; for at so great a distance from our country, the smallest loss was sensibly felt by us.

Our real misery was disguised by an apparent abundance ; we had neither bread or meat ; yet our tables were covered with sweatmeats, syrups, and dainties. Coffee, and all sorts of wines, served in china or crystal vases, made it appear, that, with us, luxury was nearly allied to poverty. The extent and nature of our wants rendered money of little value to us, and this gave rise to exchanges ; those who had cloth, offered it for wine ; and he who had a pelisse could procure plenty of sugar and coffee.

In the meantime Napoleon still buoyed him-

self up with the ridiculous hope of reclaiming, by mild proclamations, those who, to free themselves from his yoke, had made of their capital an immense funeral-pile. In order to seduce them, and inspire them with confidence, he had divided the remains of the town into quarters; appointed commandants for each, and instituted magistrates, in order to render to the few citizens who still remained, the justice which was due to them. The Consul-General Lesseps, appointed governor of Moscow, published a proclamation, to announce to the inhabitants, the *fatherly intentions* of Napoleon; but these *kind* and *generous* promises never reached the Moscovites; and even if they had, the rigorous circumstances under which they were placed, would have made them consider it as a grievous irony. Besides, the greater part had fled behind the Volga, and the others, who had taken refuge in the midst of the Russian army, animated by a legitimate hatred, breathed only sentiments of vengeance!

In the mean time Prince Kutzusoff, having conveyed the greater part of his forces to Lec-taskova, between Moscow and Kaluga, in order to cover the southern provinces, so narrowly confined Napoleon, that in spite of his different manœuvres, he could not disengage himself from

his painful position, but saw himself always constrained to fall back on his own lines. It was impossible for him to approach Petersburg without drawing the Russian army on his rear, and endangering our safety, by renouncing all communication with Poland.

He could no longer march towards Jaroslaw and Wladimir; since new invasions in that direction, would only weaken him, and remove him further from his resources. Consequently, nothing could be more critical than the situation of the French army, since encamped on the roads of Twer, of Wladimir, of Razan, and of Kaluga.

Our head-quarters still continued at Moscow, an infectious neighbourhood, consisting only of ruins, and which was totally deserted, except by the peasants and cossacks, who, over-running the country, carried off our transports, arrested our couriers, and massacred our foragers; in short, caused us irreparable evils. From that time our position became more and more painful. Our poverty, and the discontent of the soldiers, augmented every day; and, to complete our misfortunes, there appeared no probability of a peace.

It would be curious to relate the extravagant projects and orders, which, under these circum-

stances, were sent to the army. Some of them spoke of going to Ukraine—others of marching on Petersburg. But those who were wise, maintained that we ought, ere long, to return to Wilna. Napoleon, always more obstinate when beset with difficulties, and fond of extraordinary exploits, persisted in maintaining himself in a desert, and thought to frighten the enemy, by feigning to pass the winter there. It was for the sake of this ridiculous stratagem, that he formed the plan of arming the Kremlin, and even of making a citadel of a large house, situated in the quarter of Petersburg, and vulgarly called the *Square House*. In short, as a last trait, when all was exhausted, and we had nothing to subsist on, he ordered us to make provision for two months. But while we were occupied in meditating on all these chimeras, and particularly on provisioning Moscow, without any resource, the report of peace, believed by those alone who so ardently desired it, filled our hearts with joy, and flattered us with the hope that he would not attempt to put these impracticable schemes in execution. This news gained credit on account of the armistice which had been concluded between the cossacks and the advanced posts of the King of Naples. Such a convention seemed to omen that there was some hope

of a reconciliation between the two Emperors; especially, as we knew that General Lauriston had been sent to the general quarters of Prince Kutusoff, and that, in consequence of his interview with this general-in-chief, a courier had been despatched to St. Petersburg, to decide on peace or war.

In the meantime Napoleon, with his usual activity, continually reviewed his troops, and by the most rigid examination, obliged the colonels to maintain the strictest discipline throughout their regiments. The weather, to our astonishment, still continued remarkably fine, and contributed much to render these reviews imposing. A circumstance so rare, in this advanced season, was a sort of phenomenon for the Moscovites, who, accustomed to see it snow from the month of October, beheld with surprise the fine days which we enjoyed. The people, who were naturally superstitious, and had for a long time expected winter as their avenger, in their impatience, despaired of the assistance of Providence, and began to consider this prodigy as the effect of the manifest protection which God granted to Napoleon. But this apparent protection was the principal cause of his ruin, as it made him so blind, as to believe that the climate of Moscow resembled that of Paris. His impious

vanity made him hope to command the seasons as he had commanded men ; and, by an abuse of his happy star, he believed that the sun of Austerlitz would enlighten him even unto the pole ; or that, like another Joshua, he would be able by his voice, to arrest this luminary, in order to protect his vagabond course.

Whilst they talked of a negotiation, they nevertheless prepared to recommence the war, but did nothing to guard against the rigours of winter. In the meantime the future was alarming ; the longer our stay in Moscow was protracted, the more painful it became. In proportion as we exhausted the neighbouring villages, we were compelled to go to places still more remote. Their distance rendered our excursions as perilous as they were fatiguing. Setting out at daybreak, rarely did our foragers return before night. These excursions, daily repeated, fatigued our men, and destroyed the cavalry, particularly the artillery-horses. In the midst of our wretchedness, the audacity of the cossacks redoubled in proportion as our weakness rendered us more defenceless.

As a proof of it, they intercepted, in the environs of Moscow, a convoy of artillery, coming from Viazma, and conducted by two majors. Napoleon believed these two officers

culpable, and instituted an inquiry respecting their conduct. One of them became insane, more owing to the affront, than the fear of being found guilty. In order to prevent similar losses, Broussier's division, and the light cavalry, commanded by Count Ornano, received orders to establish themselves in the environs of the *chateau* of Galitzin, situated between Mojaïsk and Moscow. These troops delivered the neighbouring country from the cossacks, who always avoided meeting them; but the smallest spot unoccupied by our troops, was immediately taken possession of by these hordes of Tartars, who profited by the advantages which the ground offered, to attempt the boldest enterprises.

They made another attack on a convoy of artillery, coming from Italy, under the orders of Major Vivés. It was reported that the escort, having taken to flight, delivered to the cossacks all the artillery which had been intrusted to it. They carried off the field-pieces and the horses, when Count Ornano, informed of this attack, pursued the cossacks, and overtook them in the middle of the woods. At the sight of our cavalry they fled, and abandoned, without resistance, all the fruits of their victory. Major Vivés would have been brought to trial, but our departure,

and the disasters which ensued, forced Napoleon to relax from his accustomed severity.

At the time that the fourteenth division guarded the road from Viazma, the thirteenth was on that of Twer. This last occupied good cantonments ; but at this time they were informed that the Count Saltikof, the favourite of the Emperor Alexander, and lord of the village of Marfino, in the neighbourhood of Dimitrow, had armed all his peasants, and that he had even entered in combination with several other lords, upon a grand scheme of insurrection. In order to put a stop to so dangerous an example, and to prevent the results, orders were given to a brigade of the thirteenth division to repair to the *chateau* de Marfino. The general who commanded it made strict inquiries to convince himself that these meetings had really taken place ; they were all fruitless : but, obliged to conform to the orders he had received, this general committed to the flames a palace justly celebrated as one of the finest in Russia. This pretended meeting caused a suspicion that Napoleon, in this expedition, had only wished to revenge himself on Count Saltikof, to whom he was an enemy, because the count was faithful to his sovereign.

The various incursions which the different corps of the army were obliged to make, con-

firmed us in the opinion that we should not be long able to maintain our position. Every thing presaged our approaching departure, and suspicion was changed into certainty on perceiving that the cavalry of the Italian guards quitted their good cantonments in the environs of Dimitrow, to return to Moscow ; and from thence to occupy the position of Charopovo (15th October), a little village situated on the road from Borovsk, about six leagues from Moscow. At the same time, the Viceroy ordered the thirteenth division to return, the fourteenth to advance, and the cavalry of General Ornano to make towards Fominskoë; whither it appeared to be the object of the fourth corps to direct their course. The cossacks, informed of this movement, availed themselves of the opportunity when the baggages of our light cavalry had but a weak escort, to seize the convoy in the environs of Osighovo; but upon seeing General Broussier's division, they abandoned a part of their booty, leaving it in the woods, in order more effectively to pursue our soldiers.

We waited with the utmost anxiety the return of the courier who had been despatched to Petersburg. In the persuasion that the answer would be favourable, our army, not sufficiently on their guard, remained in a state of false security. The

enemy profiting by this indiscretion, attacked on the 18th of October, the cavalry of the King of Naples, in the vicinity of Taroutina, and surprised a park of twenty-six pieces of cannon, which they carried off. This attack, made at the moment when the cavalry was foraging, proved fatal to this army, which was already much reduced. The few who remained still made a good appearance; and, supported by some Polish regiments, who were less fatigued than ours, we succeeded in recovering the pieces which the enemy had taken from us. General Bagawout, who commanded the fourth Russian corps, was killed in the action; and General Benngsen was wounded. The loss on our side consisted of about two thousand men: we particularly regretted the death of General Dery, aide-de-camp of the King of Naples, who had on all occasions given proof of great courage and abilities.

The Emperor was at the Kremlin, occupied in reviewing his troops, when he received this unexpected news. He immediately became furious, and, in the transports of his rage, he exclaimed, that it was treacherous and infamous; that they had attacked the King of Naples in contempt of all the laws of war, and that none but barbarians would have thus violated conven-

tions. Immediately the parade was dissolved, all hopes of peace vanished, and the order for our departure was given that very evening. All the corps were to quit Moscow, and take the grand road to Kaluga. We hoped we should go to Ukraine, to seek, under a milder sky, countries less savage and more fertile. But those who were best informed, assured us that our movement on Kaluga was only a false manœuvre, to conceal from the enemy our project of retreating on Smolensko and Witepsk.

Those who did not witness the departure of the French army from Moscow, can have but a faint idea of what the Greek and Roman armies were when they abandoned the ruins of Troy, or of Carthage. The appearance of our army at that moment recalled to our remembrance those interesting scenes which are so admirably described in the writings of Virgil and Livy. The long files of carriages which, in three or four ranks, extended for several leagues, loaded with the immense booty which the soldiers had snatched from the flames ; and those Moscovite peasants, who were now become our servants, gave one some idea of the slaves who followed in the train of the ancients. Others bringing away with them women and children, represented those warriors amongst whom the captives had been divided.

Afterwards came several ammunition-waggons filled with trophies, and Turkish or Persian draperies, which we had taken from the palaces of the Czars, and last of all the famous cross of Saint Iwan gloriously closed the rear of an army, which, but for the imprudence of its chief, would one day have had to boast having extended its conquests to the limits of Europe.

As we set out very late, we were obliged to encamp at a paltry village, only one league from Moscow. The cavalry of the Italian guards, which still remained at Charapovo, set out the following day (19th October), and joined us at Batoutinka, not far from the *chateau* of Troitskoë, where Napoleon had established his general quarters. Nearly the whole army were reunited on this point, with the exception of the cavalry which was in advance, and the young guards who remained at Moscow to bring up the rear. We experienced much difficulty in procuring the means of subsistence, but we still continued to bivouac; and the carriages which the officer brought with him, furnished us with some provisions.

On the following day, the cavalry of the royal guards were to have directed their course towards Charopovo, as well as the whole of the fourth corps; but at the moment of their departure,

they were recalled, and the Prince ordered these troops to continue their march by the same route which we had followed the preceding evening. We crossed the Pakra near Gorki. This beautiful village no longer existed but by name; and the river, choked up with the ruins of the consumed houses, appeared to be only a black and muddy stream. Above was the beautiful *chateau* of Krasnoë, which had been entirely pillaged; but the elegance of the building still formed a striking contrast to the rustic hills on which it was built. Arrived on this point, we made a halt, and an hour afterwards abandoned the high road to seek on our right a passage which would conduct us to Fominskoë, where General Brous-sier and our cavalry had been for four or five days in view of the enemy. Our march by this unfrequented road was very painful, but it pro-cured us the advantage of finding some villages, which, although they were deserted, had not been so completely ransacked as those on the great road. We passed the night at Inatowo, where we discovered a *chateau*, situated on an eminence which overlooked the country from whence we came.

We afterwards continued our march, still with an intention to regain the road to Charopovo, which we at length reached, near to the village

called Bouïkasovo. These geographical details, on which I have so much dwelt, will not appear tedious, when it is recollected that they are absolutely necessary, in order to point out the difficulties which we had to encounter in our operations. Having only incorrect maps, and marching without guides, we could not even pronounce the names of the villages described on these maps; at last, having discovered a peasant, we seized him, and kept him for two days, but he was so stupid that he could tell us nothing but the name of his own village. This march was, however, very important for the Emperor, who, with the main part of the army, would have to follow us; each day, therefore, the Prince made me draw out a plan of the road, to send to the major-general.

At last, after having surmounted all obstacles, we regained the old road of Kaluga. In one hour afterwards we arrived at Fominskoë. Brousier's division was encamped in the environs of this village, and the cavalry, placed in advance, were led on by the Viceroy, who, without delay, went to reconnoitre the height which the cossacks occupied; but at the sight of him they retired, leaving his Highness at liberty to travel over the ground on which we had expected to fight.

According to the military report, the position

of Fominskoë would have been advantageous for the Russians if they would have defended it ; in the middle of the village, overlooked by a hill, ran the river Nara, which, towards this point, owing to the contraction of the valley, formed a little lake, surrounded by marshes. In the mean time, all the army had to cross this defile, where there was only a single bridge ; this they reserved for the carriages, and constructed another on purpose for the infantry.

In order to execute this design, and that a part of the army might pass over, they gave us a day of repose (22d October). During this time, the Poles, conducted by Prince Poniatowski, marched on Vereïa, where the Hetman Platoff was with his cossacks. Napoleon followed us with his accustomed suite, and in an instant the village was filled with carriages, horses, and men. But, thanks to the wise precautions we had taken, all this passed without any confusion ; which excited not a little astonishment, for the cohorts of *Xerxes*\* never had more baggage than we had.

The same day Captain Evrard, who had been

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\* An expression which Napoleon made use of in the Bulletins of the Campaign of 1809, when speaking of the Austrian armies.

sent on a mission to Charopovo, announced to us that he had heard, on the side towards Moscow, a frightful report; we then learnt that it had been produced by the explosion of the mine which had blown up the Kremlin. The destruction of this celebrated citadel, and of the fine buildings which it enclosed, was accomplished by the young imperial guards, who, on quitting Moscow, were ordered to destroy all that the flames had spared. Thus perished this celebrated city, founded by the Tartars, and destroyed by the French! Loaded with all the favours of fortune, and situated in the centre of the continent, she experienced all the most lamentable of human vicissitudes, owing to the passions of an obscure and remote islander. The same man who affected to sacrifice us for the encouragement of civilization, appears, by his own bulletins, to be proud of having retrograded, at least, a hundred years.\*

A part of the army having crossed the Nara, the fourth corps followed them about five o'clock in the morning (23d October), and made towards Borovsk. The enemy appeared no more during this day's march; the cossacks had fled before us, doubtless, to announce to the general-in-

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\* See the Bulletins of the Campaign in Russia.

chief, that we had deceived his vigilance by leaving him on the new road from Kaluga by Taroutina, to take the old one which passes by Borovsk.

The enemy, informed of our march, immediately abandoned his intrenched camp at Lectaskova, but left us in doubt, whether he would take the road by Borovsk, or by Malo-Jaroslavitz. Napoleon occupied this first city, placed on an eminence, around which ran the Protva in a deep bed.

The Viceroy, who had encamped half a league further than Borovsk, in a little village on the right of the road, ordered Delzon's division to march on Malo-Jaroslavitz, in order to occupy the position before the Russians should seize on it. This general, having found it without defence, quietly took possession of it, with only two battalions, leaving the remainder behind him in the plain. Thus we imagined that this position was secured to us, when, on the following morning (24th October), by daybreak, we heard before us the sound of a heavy cannonade. The Viceroy, suspecting the cause of it, immediately mounted his horse, and, accompanied by his staff, galloped towards Malo-Jaroslavitz. On approaching this city, the noise of the cannon redoubled ; we heard the sharp-shooters on both

sides, at last we distinctly perceived the Russian columns, who were coming from the new road of Kaluga, in order to take up their position where we were.

On arriving at the foot of the heights of Malo-Jaroslavitz,\* General Delzons came towards us, and, approaching the Viceroy, said to him, " Yesterday evening, on my arrival, I took possession of this place, and no one then appeared to dispute it with me ; but, about four o'clock in the morning, I was attacked by a large body of infantry ; immediately two battalions took to arms, but, overpowered by a much superior force, they have been compelled to descend from the heights, and abandon Malo-Jaroslavitz."

The Viceroy, feeling the importance of this loss, and wishing immediately to repair it, gave orders to General Delzons to march, with his whole division. Fresh troops having arrived to the assistance of the Russians, an obstinate engagement took place. Our soldiers giving way for one instant, General Delzons thought they were about to retreat, and rushed into the

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\* See the Plan of the Field of Battle of Malo-Jaroslavitz.

thickest of the battle, in order to reanimate them ; but, at the moment when he was defending with obstinacy the barriers of the city, the enemy's sharp-shooters, intrenched behind the wall of a cemetary, fired upon him, when, a ball entering his forehead, he fell, and expired immediately. The Viceroy, when informed of this sad event, appeared to be much affected at the loss of a general so worthy of his esteem ; and, after having paid a just tribute to his memory, sent for General Guilleminot to replace him. He also ordered the fourteenth division to enter the lines, to assist those who had been so long engaged. Our soldiers resumed the offensive, when several fresh columns of Russians coming from Lectaskova, put them to the rout ; we even saw them descending the hill with precipitation, and making towards the bridge, as if they wished to repass the river Louja, which ran at the foot of the eminence. But, shortly afterwards, our brave men, reanimated by Colonel Forestier, and, seeing themselves supported by the chasseurs and grenadiers of the royal guards, resumed their former station, and once more ascended the heights. In the meantime, the great number of wounded who had abandoned the field of battle, and, above all, the difficulty of procuring subsistence in Malo-Jaro-

slavitz, made the Viceroy see the necessity of sending other troops against the continual reinforcements of the enemy. Pino's division, which, during the whole of the campaign, had sought for an opportunity of distinguishing themselves, obeyed, with transport, the orders of the Prince. They ascended the heights, and immediately commenced the charge; when, uttering shouts of joy, they succeeded in establishing themselves in all the positions from whence the enemy had driven us. This success was dearly purchased: a great number of intrepid Italians fell a sacrifice to their emulation of French valour, nor was it without regret that we learnt the death of General Levié, whom fate permitted to enjoy his new rank only eight days. We were equally afflicted, on beholding General Pino return covered with blood; who, though he suffered much from the pain of his wound, felt still more sensibly the death of a brother who had fallen by his side. During this time, the enemy's cannon raged with fury, and his balls carried death and destruction, even into the ranks of the royal light troops, placed in reserve, and amongst the staff of his Highness. It was then that General Giffenga, a man of great merit, and extraordinary courage, received a ball in his

throat, which obliged him to quit the field of battle.

The success of the day was decided, and we occupied the town, and all the heights, when the fifth division of the first corps came to take up their position on our left, and the third division of the same corps also came after the battle, to occupy a wood, situated on our right.\* Until nine o'clock in the evening, our batteries and foot-soldiers never ceased firing, at a very short distance from the enemy; at length, night and excessive fatigue put an end to this sanguinary combat; but it was nearly ten o'clock, before the Viceroy and the staff were able to take the repose which was necessary, after so many fatigues. We encamped beneath Malo-Jaroslavitz, between the town and the river Louja. As to the troops, they bivouaced throughout the whole of the positions which they had so gloriously taken possession of. The next day, we felt convinced that the obstinacy with which the Russians had disputed our possession of Malo-Jaroslavitz, was in consequence of their intention of effecting a movement on our right,

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\* See the field of battle of Malo-Jaroslavitz.

in order to arrive at Viazma before us, well persuaded that our march on Kaluga was only a manœuvre, made with the design of concealing our retreat. About four o'clock in the morning, the Viceroy mounted his horse. We ascended the eminence on which the battle had been fought, when we saw the plain covered with cossacks, whose light artillery were firing on our troops; we also observed on our left three grand redoubts. They had from fifteen to twenty pieces of cannon, with which they defended the right flank of Kutusoff. About ten o'clock the firing abated, and at twelve it entirely ceased.

The interior of Malo-Jaroslavitz, presented the most horrible spectacle; on entering, we beheld with grief the spot where General Delzons had perished, and regretted that a premature death had put an end to his glorious career. The soldiers bestowed high encomiums on his brother, who received a mortal wound, while endeavouring to snatch him from the hand of the enemy. A little further on, they shewed us the place where General Fontane had been wounded. At the foot of the eminence, we saw the grenadiers of the 35th regiment of the line, who were rendering funeral honours on their brave colonel.

The town where we had fought was no longer in existence; we could not distinguish the lines

of the streets, for the numerous dead bodies with which they were strewed. On all sides we saw nothing but the scattered remains of human bodies. The houses formed a pile of ruins, and under their burning ashes, appeared skeletons half consumed. There were also many sick and wounded, who, on quitting the field of battle, took refuge in these houses. The small number of those who had escaped the flames, presented themselves before us, with their faces blackened, and their clothes and hair dreadfully burnt. In a lamentable tone, they uttered the most doleful cries. On seeing them, the most ferocious were affected, and, turning away their eyes, could not refrain from shedding tears. The sight of this distressing picture made every one tremble at the evils to which despotism exposes humanity, and fancied that we had returned to those barbarous times, when we could only appease the gods, by offering human victims on their sanguinary altars.

Towards the afternoon, Napoleon, having arrived with a numerous suite, calmly surveyed the field of battle, and heard without emotion, the doleful cries of the unhappy wounded, who demanded assistance.

This man, although accustomed for twenty years to the evils of war, of which he was so

fond, was astonished when he entered the city, at the desperation with which they must have fought. Even had he intended to march on Tula and Kaluga, the experience of this combat would have deterred him. On this occasion, even his insensibility was forced to render justice to those who had merited it. He gave a convincing proof of this, in praising the valour of the fourth corps, and in saying to the Viceroy, “The honour of this glorious day ‘belongs entirely to you.’” While we were disputing with the enemy the position of Malo-Jaroslavitz, more than six thousand cossacks rushed on the general quarters of the Emperor, established at Ghorodnia, and carried off six pieces of cannon, which were posted not far from this village.

The Duke of Istria galloped after them with all the cavalry of the guards, and succeeded in retaking the artillery, which had been surprised. The cossacks, cut to pieces and dispersed, effected their retreat; but, in their flight, one of their numerous detachments attacked the equipages of the fourth corps, and would have seized them, if the cavalry of the Italian guards had not received them with the same intrepidity as the imperial guards. Under these circumstances, they praised the coolness of the

commander Joubert, who, seated in his carriage, had the firmness not to stir from it, but drew his sword on the cossacks, who surrounded his carriage; and defended himself till he could obtain assistance.

From the commencement of the campaign, the son of the Hetman Platoff, mounted on a superb white horse, from the Ukraine, was the faithful companion in arms of his brave father, and always at the head of the cossacks. He was distinguished by the advanced guards, for his courage and intrepidity. This fine young man was the idol of his father, and the hope of the warlike nation, who would one day have been under his command. But destiny had pronounced his fate, and the fatal hour was at hand. In a desperate charge of the cavalry, which took place near Vereia, between Prince Poniatowski and the Hetman Platoff, the Poles and Russians, animated by a mutual hatred, fought with fury. Excited by the ardour of the combat, they cut each other to pieces, and on all sides fell great men, who had escaped many former battles. Platoff, who saw his best soldiers falling around him, forgot the danger, and, with an anxious eye, sought his favourite son. But this unfortunate father had nearly arrived at that dreadful moment when life is almost insupportable;

for the unfortunate young man, returning from the heat of the battle, while making preparations to renew the attack, received a mortal wound from a Hulan Pole.

At this instant, his father appeared, who, flying to his assistance, threw himself upon him. On seeing him, the son heaved a deep sigh, and wished to express, for the last time, his affection for a beloved parent; but, on attempting to open his lips, he breathed his last. In the meantime, Platoff, who could not restrain his tears, retired to his tent, to give vent to his feelings. At that moment, he even considered life a burden, and could no longer endure the light. The following morning, by day-break, the chiefs of the cossacks came to express their grief, and to request that they might be permitted to render funeral honours to the son of their Hetman. Every one, on seeing this fine young man stretched in a bear-skin, respectfully kissed the hand of a youth, who, but for a premature death, would have equalled the greatest heroes, by his valour, and by his virtues. After having, according to their religious rites, offered fervent prayers for the repose of his soul, they removed him from the presence of his father, in order to carry him in solemn procession to a

neighbouring eminence, covered with cypress, where he was to be interred.

The cossacks, all ranged in order of battle, observed a religious silence, and bowed their heads in profound respect, while grief was painted in every countenance. At the moment when the earth was for ever to separate them from the son of their Prince, they fired a volley over the grave. Afterwards, holding their horses in their hands, they defiled around the tomb, with their lances pointed towards the earth.

## BOOK VII.

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### *DOROGHOBOUI.*

THE victory of Malo-Jaroslavitz discovered to us two melancholy truths :—first, that the Russians, far from being weakened, had been reinforced by numerous battalions ; and that they all fought with an obstinacy which made us despair of gaining new victories. “ But two “ battles more, like this,” said the soldiers, “ and Napoleon will be without an army.” It likewise discovered that we could no longer effect an easy retreat, since the enemy having, at the close of the engagement, outflanked us, prevented our columns from retiring by the route of Medouin, Joukhnov, and Elnia, and reduced us to the unhappy necessity of retreating precipitately by the great road of Smolensko, or in other words, by the desert which we ourselves had made. Beside these apprehensions, too well founded, we also knew that the Russians had despatched before us the army of Moldavia,

on the very route which we were to pursue, and that the corps of Wittgenstein was advancing to join that army.

After this memorable combat, those who judged only from appearances and popular report, supposed that we should march on Kaluga and Tula ; but when they saw that a strong advanced-guard of the enemy, instead of taking that direction, had outflanked our right by defiling on Medouin, all those who were experienced in warlike manœuvres, perceived that the Russians had penetrated the designs of Napoleon, and that it was necessary for us to make a rapid march on Viazma, to arrive there before them. There was now no more question of Kaluga or the Ukraine, but to effect a safe retreat on the route of Borovsk. As soon as the retreat was determined on, the fourth corps began its retrograde march, leaving all the first corps, and the cavalry of General Chastel, at Jaroslavitz. These troops were to form the rear-guard, at the distance of a day's march from us (October 26th). We saw on our march to what the sad and memorable victory of Malo-Jaroslavitz had reduced us. At every step were waggons abandoned for want of horses to draw them, and the remains of innumerable military carriages burnt for the same reason. With such misfortunes, at the very

commencement of our retreat, we formed sad and mournful presages of the future. Those who carried with them the spoils of Moscow, trembled for their riches. We were principally disquieted at seeing the deplorable state of the feeble remains of our cavalry, and we listened with melancholy foreboding to the frequent explosions of our ammunition-waggons, which sounded from afar like distant thunder.

It was night when we arrived at Ouvarooskoë. Surprised at seeing the villages in flames, we were informed that orders had been issued to destroy every thing in our route. In the village in which we then were was a *chateau*, which, although in the centre of a wood, possessed a grandeur and magnificence equal to the noblest palaces of Italy. The richness of the furniture corresponded with the beauty of the architecture. We saw there many exquisite paintings, chandeliers of the greatest value, and numerous lustres of rock-crystal, which gave to these apartments, when lighted up, an appearance truly enchanting. Even this was not spared; and we learned on the morrow that our artillery-men, finding the progress of the flames too slow, had hastened and completed the destruction, by placing several barrels, filled with gunpowder, on the ground-floor.

The villages, which a few days before had afforded us shelter, were now level with the ground. Under their ashes, yet warm, and which the wind drove towards us, were the bodies of hundreds of soldiers and peasants. Many an infant was to be seen cruelly butchered, and many a female savagely massacred on the spot where she had been seduced. We left the village of Borovsk, which had been equally a prey to the flames, on our right, to re-ascend the Protva, and find a ford for our artillery. Having found one, half a league from the village, it would have been attempted by all our corps, but many of the waggons, sticking fast in the middle of the river, so much encumbered the only spot at which a passage there was practicable, that it was necessary to search for another ford. On reconnoitring the bridge of Borovsk, I found that it still remained, and that it offered great facility for carrying over the baggage. Immediately the Prince caused the third division to march back, and thus, by means of the bridge, opened to our corps a better and a shorter route. The only danger which we had to fear, was the passage of the waggons laden with ammunition, through a town completely in flames.

The fourth corps filed across this vast conflagration without a single accident, and after

having passed through many frightful defiles, the night found us at the execrable village of Alféréva (Oct. 27th), where the generals of division with difficulty found a barn to shelter them. That of the Viceroy was so ruinous, that we pitied those who were destined to inhabit it. In addition to all these evils, the want of provision aggravated our calamities. That which we had brought from Moscow was almost consumed, and every one, covetous of the little which remained to him, retired to eat in secret the morsel of bread which his industry had procured. Our horses fared yet worse. A little thatch torn from the roofs of the houses was their only food. Many of them died of fatigue and hunger, the artillery were obliged to abandon all that was not absolutely necessary, and every day redoubled, in a frightful manner, the explosions of the waggons, which were blown up and destroyed (October 28th). The day following we repassed the Protva a little below Vereïa. This town was burning at the moment of our passage; and the devouring flames, rising in whirlwinds on every side, soon reduced it to ashes. Vereïa was the more unfortunate, since, lying at a distance from the great road, she had for a moment flattered herself that she might escape the calamities by which she was surrounded. In truth, with the exception

of the engagement between the Russians and the Poles, she had hitherto experienced little of the horrors of war. Her fields had not been ravaged, and her well-cultivated gardens were now covered with vegetables of every kind, which our famished soldiers devoured in an instant. At night we slept at a wretched village, of which we could not learn the name. We supposed that it was Mitiaéva, because we were only a league from Ghorodok-Borisov. This place was yet more miserable than the village at which we had halted the night before. The greater part of the officers passed the night in the open air, which was the more unpleasant, as the nights began to be extremely cold, and little wood could be procured. Even the huts which the generals had hastily erected for themselves, were demolished by the soldiers to supply a few scanty fires ; and many who went to sleep in comfortable cabins, on waking in the middle of the night, found that the sky was their only covering.

Napoleon, who preceded us one march, had already passed Mojaïsk, burning and destroying every thing which he found on his route. His soldiers were so intent on this devastation, that they burned even the places where we should have halted, which exposed us to great and unnecessary suffering ; but our corps in its turn

burnt the few houses which the others had left, and deprived the army of the Prince of Eckmuhl, which formed the rear-guard, of all power to shelter itself from the intolerable cold of the night. That corps had likewise to contend with an exasperated enemy, which, learning our retreat, hastened on every side to avenge itself. The cannon which we heard every day, and at distances continually diminishing, sufficiently announced to us the fatigues, the sufferings, and the dangers, of that division of the army.

At length, having passed through Ghorodok-Borisov (October 29th), in the midst of almost impenetrable clouds of smoke, we entered, an hour afterwards, on a plain which appeared to have been long since devastated. We saw at a distance the dead bodies of men and horses, and numerous intrenchments, half-destroyed ; also the appearance of the ruined town, which we recognised as the environs of Mojaïsk, through which we had passed as conquerors, fifty-one days before. The Poles encamped upon the ruins, and, at their departure, burnt the few houses which had escaped the first conflagration. The destruction was so complete, that we could scarcely see the light of the flames. The only thing which struck us was the newly-erected tower, rising amid the ruins, and, by its

whiteness, forming a melancholy contrast with the black clouds which enveloped it. It remained entire, and the clock yet tolled the hours, though the city was no more.

Our corps did not pass through Mojaïsk; but, striking off to the left, we arrived (October 29th) at the site of the village of Krasnoë, where we had slept the day after the battle of the Moskwa : I say the site of the village, for the houses existed no longer, and the *chateau* alone had been preserved for the use of Napoleon. We encamped round the *chateau*, and, as long as I live, I shall recollect the comfortable night which we passed, protected from the cold, while we slept on the yet warm ashes of the houses, which had been burnt the day before.

(October 30th.) The further we advanced, the more desolate the country appeared. The fields, trampled down by thousands of horses, seemed as though they had never been cultivated. The forests, cleared by the long continuance of the troops, partook likewise of the general desolation. But most horrible was the multitude of dead bodies, which, deprived of burial fifty-two days, scarcely retained the human form. On approaching Borodino, my consternation was inexpressible, at finding the twenty thousand men, who were there destroyed, yet lying ex-

posed on the same spot. The whole plain was entirely covered with them. None of the bodies were more than half buried. Here were to be seen, garments yet red with blood, and bones gnawed by dogs and birds of prey ; there broken arms, drums, helmets, and swords : fragments of standards lay scattered thick around, and, from the emblems with which they were covered, it was easy to judge how much the Russian eagle had suffered on that bloody day.

On one side we saw the remains of the cottage at which Kutusoff had encamped ; more to the left, the famous redoubt. It yet frowned threateningly over the plain. It elevated itself like a pyramid in the midst of a desert. When I mused on what it had been, and what it then was, I thought that I saw Vesuvius in repose. Perceiving a soldier on the summit, in the remote distance his immovable figure had the effect of a statue. "Ah !" I exclaimed, " if ever " a statue is consecrated to the demon of war, " it should be placed on this pedestal."

As we traversed the field of battle, we heard, at a distance, a feeble voice appealing to us for succour. Touched by his plaintive cries, some soldiers approached the spot, and, to their astonishment saw, stretched on the ground, a French soldier, with both his legs fractured. "I

" was wounded," said he, " on the day of the great battle. I fainted from the agony which I endured, and, on recovering my senses, I found myself in a desolate place, where no one could hear my cries, or afford me relief. For two months, I daily dragged myself to the brink of a rivulet, where I fed on the grass, and on the roots, and on some morsels of bread, which I found among the dead bodies. At night I laid myself down under the shelter of some dead horses. To day, seeing you at a great distance, I summoned all my strength, and happily crawled sufficiently near your route to make myself heard." While the surrounding soldiers were expressing their surprise, the general, who was informed of an occurrence so singular, and so touching, placed the unfortunate wretch in his own carriage.

My history would far exceed the bounds prescribed, were I to recount all the calamities which that atrocious war produced. I will relate one only, from which my readers may judge of the rest. Three thousand prisoners were brought from Moscow. Having nothing to give them during their march, they were at night driven into a narrow fold like so many beasts. Without fire, and without food, they lay on the bare ice,

and, to assuage the hunger which tortured them, those who had not the courage to die, nightly fed on the flesh of their companions, whom fatigue, misery, and famine, had destroyed.

But I turn from a picture so shocking, and pursue the course of my narration ; I shall soon have horrors enough to describe, which fell to the lot of my friends and companions in arms.

We repassed the Kologha, with as much precipitation as we had formerly crossed it, under the auspices of victory. The steps which conducted to the river were so steep, and the frozen earth so slippery, that men and horses continually fell over each other. Happy would it have been for us, if the passage of other rivers, so often multiplied upon us, had not been yet more dangerous than this.

We saw again the abbey of Kolotskoi. Despoiled of its former splendour, and surrounded by ruins, it resembled more a hospital than a convent. It was the only house which had been spared since our retreat from Moscow ; it was given to the sick and wounded, who wished to breathe their last in its peaceful asylum.

The fourth division, forming always the advanced-guard, halted at a miserable village, situated half a league to the right of the road, between the abbey of Kolotskoi, and Prokofévo.

Of all the places of repose, at which we had hitherto stopped, this was the most intolerable. It had nothing remaining but some wretched sheds, and the thatch had been torn from the roofs to give to the half-famished horses. These constituted the only shelter for the Prince and his staff.

On the morrow (October 31st) we commenced our march at an early hour, and, being arrived at the heights of Prokofévo, we heard the sound of cannon so near us, that the Viceroy, fearing that the Prince of Eckmühl was pushed by the enemy, halted on one of the heights, and drew up his troops in order of battle to succour him. For some days many persons complained of the slowness with which the first division marched. They had blamed the system of retreat by echelons, adopted by the commander-in-chief, saying that it had lost three days' march, and thus had enabled the advanced-guard of Miloradowitch easily to overtake us. Finally, they had objected to him, that he ought to pass rapidly over a country which did not afford the means of subsistence. He might have replied, in his own justification, that too rapid a retreat would have redoubled the audacity of the enemy, who, strong in light cavalry, could at all times overtake us, and cut in pieces our rear-guard, if it had refused

the combat. He could have added this maxim of war :—The more precipitate a retreat, the more fatal it becomes, because the depression and fear which it occasions in the minds of the soldiers, is more to be dreaded than any physical evils. The Viceroy having made these dispositions on the heights of Prokofévo, to succour the Prince of Eckmuhl, and soon understanding that that Marshal was only harassed by the cossacks, proceeded towards Ghiatz always taking care that his divisions marched in the greatest order, and halting, whenever it was possible that the Prince of Eckmuhl could want his support. It is impossible to give too much praise to Prince Eugene, for his conduct in these critical circumstances. He was always the last of his column, and he now bivouacked a league on this side Ghiatz, that he might be ready the more promptly to repel the attack of the enemy. The night which the Prince and his staff here passed, was the severest to which they had been exposed. They halted on a little hill, near the place where formerly stood the village of Joachkovo. Not one house remained ; the whole hamlet had been long since destroyed. To complete their sufferings, a violent and piercing wind arose. Not a tree afforded them shelter, and nature, in depriving that situation of wood, had refused the only

thing which could mitigate the severity of the climate of Russia. Although our own sufferings were thus great, we were not insensible to those which our enemies endured. On approaching Ghiatz, in the morning, we felt the sincerest regret on perceiving that the whole town had disappeared. We should have searched for it in vain, had it not been for the ruins of a few houses of stone, which shewed that this had once been a place of human habitation, and that we were not wandering amid the remains of a forest consumed by fire. Never were cruelty and revenge pushed so far. Ghiatz, constructed entirely of wood, disappeared in a day, and left its former inhabitants, and even its enemies, to regret the fall of its industry, and the destruction of its prosperity. It was the most commercial and flourishing town in Russia. It contained many excellent manufactories of cloth and leather, and furnished the Russian navy with considerable quantities of tar, cordage, and marine stores.

The weather, which was piercingly cold in the night, was beautiful during the day, and the troops, though almost worn out by their sufferings, and exposed to privations of every kind, were full of courage, and eager to meet the enemy. All seemed to feel that their only safety consisted in manfully struggling with the diffi-

culties by which they were surrounded. They had, for many days past, been reduced to subsist on horse-flesh: even the generals had begun to share the same food. The mortality of these animals was even regarded as a fortunate circumstance; and, without this resource, the soldier would have much more severely experienced the horrors of famine.

(November 1st.) The cossacks, whose approach we had dreaded, no longer delayed to realize our fears. Hitherto, while they had not been seen, the soldier marched with his accustomed confidence, and the baggage-waggons, feebly escorted, were so numerous, that they formed many distinct convoys, at considerable distances from each other. Near the ruined village of Czarevo-Saïmiché was a causeway, about five hundred feet long, where the great road formerly passed. The passage of the artillery had so worn it, that it was no longer practicable, and, to continue the route, it was necessary to descend into a marshy meadow, cut by a large river. The waggons, which went first, easily passed over the ice; but this, at length, being broken by the multitude which thronged over, as the river was not fordable by the artillery, it became necessary to wait while some wretched bridges were constructed in haste. In the meantime the head of

the column being thus arrested, fresh carriages continually arrived. Artillery, baggage-waggons, and sutler's carts, all crowded one on another, and the drivers, according to their custom, profited by the momentary delay, to light their fires, and to chafe their limbs benumbed with the cold. While all was in this security and confusion, on a sudden, the cossacks, uttering the most frightful cries, rushed from a thick wood on our left, and precipitated themselves on these poor wretches. All were panic-struck at their sight, and almost unconscious of what they did. Some ran to the woods, others fled to their carriages, and, lashing their feeble horses, galloped in confusion over the plain. These were most to be pitied. The rivulets, the marshes, the slipperiness, or the breaking of the ice, soon arrested their progress, and left them an easy prey to their pursuers. They were most fortunate, who, taking advantage of the numerous carriages, intrenched themselves behind them, and awaited that deliverance which was not slow in arriving : for, as soon as the cossacks perceived the infantry advancing upon them, they retreated, after having wounded a few of the drivers, and pillaged some of the ammunition-waggons.

Those to whom the care of escorting or conducting the baggage was intrusted, profited by

the disorder which the presence of the cossacks excited, to pillage and destroy what they had sworn to defend. From that time dishonesty and theft spread themselves so rapidly and so universally through the army, that we were not more secure amongst our own soldiers, than we should have been in the midst of the enemy. Whatever the soldiers took a fancy to, they availed themselves of some opportunity to purloin ; and, encouraged by the impunity with which they set all discipline at defiance, they procured more frequent opportunities to thieve, by industriously spreading false alarms.

The royal guard was clearing the defile of Czarevo-Saïmiché when the baggage was attacked. It immediately received orders to halt, and, while it rested on its arms, we saw the cossacks on our left, not two hundred paces from us, reconnoitring our situation. It was even said, that, profiting by the intervals which subsisted between some of our divisions, they frequently crossed our route. But their bravadoes, exercised with success against the followers of our camp, had no effect, when attempted against the regular troops. When the royal guard saw the cossacks thus hovering on their flanks, they no longer thought of continuing their march, but halted by a wood not far from Vélitschevo. The other divisions en-

camped near the Viceroy, who remained constantly, in the rear, since the Russians appeared so determined to harass our retreat.

(November 2d). On the morrow, three hours before day, we abandoned this position. Our nocturnal march was truly terrifying. The night was fearfully dark, and, afraid of running one against another, we were compelled to grope along our way with a slowness which gave us full leisure to indulge in the most melancholy reflections. In spite of our precaution, we often fell into the ditches on each side of the road, and were precipitated into the deep ravines, with which it was intersected. At length our impatience for the dawn became insupportable. We hoped that its cheering light would render our march less hazardous and terrifying, and would protect us from the ambushes of an enemy, whose accurate knowledge of the country gave it a fatal advantage in all its manœuvres.

We were assured, indeed, that we should soon be attacked. Those who were acquainted with the country, feared the position of Viazma, because they knew that, near that city, the road from Medouin, shorter than ours, and which part of the Russian army had taken, after the battle of Malo-Jaroslavitz, joined the great road. They also regarded the cossacks, who had appeared the

day before, as the advanced-guard of the numerous cavalry of Platoff, and the two divisions of General Miloradowitch, which would suddenly burst upon us near Viazma.

Our pioneers, and the equipage of the Viceroy, were only a league from that city, and nothing yet betokened the presence of the enemy. In the meantime, that Prince being in the rear-guard with the first corps, perceiving that the distance between the two extremities of his column hazarded the safety of the army, ordered the troops which were in advance to halt. In that interval, Colonel Labedoyère, aid-de-camp to the Emperor, arrived from Viazma. On hearing the dangers to which that officer had been exposed, we doubted not that on the morrow we should be compelled to force our way with the point of the bayonet.

The Viceroy halted at Fœdorovskoé, although he was expected at Viazma. The divisions of the army encamped around him. At his right, facing the enemy, were the Poles, a little in front of the first corps, which, though the rear-guard, was but a short distance from us, so sharply had they been pressed. The Prince Eugene had indeed slackened his march to form a junction with them. (November 3d). Our divisions were on the march at six o'clock on the

following morning. As we approached Viazma, and our baggage was already in that city, the cossacks shewed that they were, indeed, near us, by commencing a sudden and violent attack. The waggons, however, drew up round a little church, until the arrival of our troops put the enemy to flight. When, however, these troops attempted to continue their march, the first brigade of the thirteenth division, commanded by General Nagle, which formed the rear-guard of our part of the army, was attacked on its left flank, a league and a half from Viazma. Numerous squadrons of Russian horse debouched from the very road which we had dreaded, and threw themselves into the space which separated the fourth corps from the first. The Viceroy, perceiving the danger of his situation, suddenly halted his divisions, and recalled his artillery, that the well-directed fire of the batteries might check an enemy, all whose manœuvres tended effectually to cut off our retreat by possessing themselves of Viazma.

While these divisions executed divers evolutions to frustrate the plans of the Russians, they were followed by the first corps, and we remarked, with regret, that these troops, worn out, no doubt, by unheard-of sufferings, and incessant combat, had lost that due subordina-

tion, and undaunted courage, which we had so often admired. The soldiers were regardless of discipline, and most of them being wounded, or sinking under fatigue, increased the crowd of mere camp-followers.

The fourth corps was thus left, for a considerable time, to sustain alone, not only the charge of a numerous cavalry, but also the reiterated attacks of a body of Russian infantry, consisting of more than twelve thousand men. In the meantime, the first corps having filed off behind us, to the right of the road, at length took a position, on the left of the same road, between Viazma and the point of attack, and thus relieved the troops of the fourth corps, which the Vice-roy had caused to advance, at the beginning of the action. These, in their turn, occupied some advantageous positions, which they found at the right of the road; and thus, conjointly with the first corps, were ready to receive the attack, which the Russians again threatened.

Our fourteenth division, which had been in front of the thirteenth, suffered that division now to pass it, and relieved it by becoming the rear-guard. The fifteenth, which had followed the fourteenth, remained with the royal guard, near Viazma, as a reserve. The order of battle being thus arranged, the enemy's infantry advanced, and

the engagement commenced with considerable warmth, but with a decided superiority in artillery on the part of the Russians. The miserable state of our cattle would not permit us to manœuvre our pieces with much celerity. It was in this engagement that Colonel Banco, aide-de-camp to the Viceroy, and commandant of the 2d regiment of Italian horse-rangers, had his head carried off by a cannon-ball.

Our troops, in spite of their inferiority, maintained their positions long enough for the baggage to pass through Viazma, in the greatest order. A party of the enemy's cavalry then attempted to break through our two wings. That which, during our retreat, had advanced on our right, was repulsed by a body of infantry, furnished with cannon. The other, on our left, was equally repulsed by the Bavarian horse, which were opposed to it, and by some battalions of sharp-shooters, concealed in the bushes, with which the field of battle was covered.

This manœuvre of the Russians, however, spread the greatest consternation among those whom either disease of body, or want of courage, had caused to quit their ranks, and to mingle with the followers of the camp. This description of persons was, unhappily, very numerous,

principally among the cavalry, which was almost entirely dismounted. They were, in truth, become more than useless to us. In the perilous situation in which we then found ourselves, they constituted our greatest danger. They not only impeded all our manœuvres, but they spread alarm and disorder on all sides, by flying with precipitation before an enemy, with which their cowardice would not permit them to fight. The cossacks, likewise, seeing this feeble and unarmed multitude flying precipitately before them, acquired fresh courage, and attacked us with redoubled ardour, believing that these columns of runaways were the only troops with which they had to contend. Although we repulsed every attack, our situation was becoming exceedingly critical, until, happily, the grand ravine, situated at the right of our route, and, above all, the excellent position which the Duke of Elchingen occupied, arrested the progress of the Russians. That marshal, being left the day before in a position near Viazma, to await the passage of the first corps, and to take its place as rear-guard, had the glory of extricating us from the greatest danger, to which we had hitherto been exposed. During the whole action, he assisted in person, and he continued to march with the Viceroy and the

Prince of Eckmuhl, that he might confer with them on the measures which it was necessary to adopt.

It was nearly four hours after mid-day, when our division passed through Viazma. Leaving the city, we saw the third division encamped on a little hill at our left. We owed much gratitude to that corps for having so well defended a situation so important. The bravery with which those troops stood their ground, rendered the fierce and reiterated attacks of an enemy, superior in numbers, completely ineffectual, and contributed much to save the first and fourth corps from absolute destruction. That last division accomplished its retreat behind the river of Viazma, where the Prince endeavoured to repair the disasters of that unfortunate battle, sustained under circumstances in which the most skilful combinations could scarcely promise a favourable issue.

Traversing the forest at the foot of the hill of Viazma, we met a convoy of the sick and wounded, which had left Moscow before us. These unfortunate beings, after having been many days deprived of all succour, and almost of food, encamped in this forest, which served them for an hospital and a grave. The horses had perished of fatigue and hunger, and their guards had forsaken them, and abandoned them to their

fate. We encamped near them, and, at the approach of night, kindled an enormous fire, at the back of a little hill covered with brushwood. The royal guard was round the tent of the Prince, the thirteenth and fourteenth divisions were placed on our flanks, while the fifteenth division, though considerably weakened, formed our rear-guard.

From this position, the whole horizon appeared on fire. This was occasioned by the destruction of those houses at Viazma, which had escaped the first conflagration. The third corps, which always preserved its position to protect our retreat, although it was separated from the Russians by a river, and by deep ravins, seemed to be frequently attacked. Often in the silence of the night we were startled by the report of cannon, which, passing over the thick forests, sounded in a peculiarly mournful and horrible manner. This unexpected sound, repeated by the echoes of the valley, was lengthened into dismal reverberations; and often, when our harassed powers were sinking into calm and refreshing repose, suddenly roused us, while we hastily and fearfully ran to arms, expecting that the enemy, which we knew to be at hand, was advancing to surprise us.

(November 4th.) At one o'clock in the morning

the Viceroy deemed it prudent, to profit by the obscurity of the night, to effect his retreat, and gain some hours' march on the Russians, with whom he could not fight, since famine would not permit us to remain one unnecessary day in a country completely depopulated and laid waste. We marched along the great road, groping our way in the dark. The route was entirely covered with the fragments of carriages and artillery. Men and horses, worn down with fatigue, could scarcely drag themselves along; and, as soon as the last fell exhausted, the soldiers eagerly divided the carcass among themselves, and hastened to broil on the coals, that food which, during many days, had constituted their only nourishment. Suffering yet more from the cold than from hunger, they abandoned their ranks, to warm themselves by a fire hastily kindled; but when they would rise to depart, their frost-bitten limbs refused their office, a partial insensibility crept over them, and they preferred falling into the hands of the enemy, rather than make a feeble effort to continue their journey.

Day had broken some time when we arrived at the village of Polianovo, near which ran the little river Osma. The bridge was very narrow and bad. The crowd which had to pass it was immense. As every one eagerly rushed on

to clear this narrow defile, the Viceroy was compelled to order the officers of his staff to interpose their authority, and to maintain some little order in so dangerous a place. He even condescended to stay himself, and to use every necessary precaution to facilitate the passage of the artillery, in the midst of a crowd of carriages, which rushed on to enter the defile.

Beneath the town of Semlevo, ran another branch of the river Osma, more considerable than the first. The march of the troops was not, however, delayed ; they profited by a bridge both large and solid, to extricate themselves from a situation, from which the enemy might have derived the greatest advantages, had they known how to avail themselves of them. Semlevo, built on a steep hill, commands the road by which we arrived ; at its foot is the Osma, the bridge of which is completely commanded from the hill, and might have been rendered utterly impassable.

Towards the close of the day, we found a shelter for the Prince, in a little chapel situated near this river, which, making a considerable circuit to the right from Semlevo, returns again, and passes the road, at the spot at which we were. We had scarcely established ourselves round the chapel, when the camp-followers,

having gone to forage, were attacked by the cossacks, and fled back with precipitation. Some had lost horses, others their clothes, and many were covered with wounds from the sabre and the lance. It was necessary to think of retreating, and, while the baggage of the Viceroy evacuated that position, we saw the troops of the enemy advancing to the banks of that branch of the Osma, which it was necessary for us to pass. In these circumstances, we were convinced how necessary it was in a retreat, to secure well the passage of every river. This, though small, was scarcely fordable, and had no bridge. To pass it, men, horses, and waggons, precipitated themselves into the water; a situation the more deplorable, as the Russians, profiting by our distress, began to harass the rear of the column, and to spread consternation amidst the immense crowd, which, remaining on the other side, saw itself compelled to cross a river, large, deep, and half frozen, and whose banks were extremely boggy. All the while we heard the balls of the enemy whistling over our heads, and threatening every moment to destroy us. With this exception the passage presented nothing unfortunate. Night approached, and the cossacks discontinued their attacks. Our loss merely con-

sisted of a few carriages, which we were compelled to leave in the middle of the river.

This obstacle being surmounted, we entered on a forest, at the extremity of which, towards the left, was a *chateau*, long ago pillaged. There we established ourselves for the night, near the village of Rouibki. We had only horse-flesh to eat, except that there remained in one of the waggons a little flour, which had been brought from Moscow. A very small quantity of this was given to each officer to make his *bouillie*. It was carefully measured out to every one with a spoon. As for our horses, we were content if we could give them the straw, which in our former passage had served them for litter.

(November 5th.) Early in the morning we pursued our retreat, and, without any fatal rencontre with the enemy, arrived at a large village, of which some houses had been spared. We particularly remarked a large house built of stone, and it was by the name of the Stone-House that we designated that village.\* We could rarely ascertain the names of the places through which we passed, and we designated them in our journals by something characteristic, whether it

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\* This village appears from the map to have been Jalkou Postoja Door.

referred to their situation, or form, or any peculiar hardships which we there endured. One was called the Hurrah, from the dreadful cry of the cossacks. Another, "That near which we were beaten." We spoke not of those at which we had suffered from hunger, for that was common to every village through which we passed. Hitherto we had endured our misfortunes with calmness and resignation, buoyed up by the flattering hope that they would soon cease. When we departed from Moscow, we had regarded Smolensko as the limit of our retreat, where we should rejoin the divisions left on the Nieper and the Dwina, taking these two rivers as the boundary of our territories, and the beautiful country of Lithuania as our winter-quarters. We likewise pleased ourselves with the thought, that Smolensko abounded in provisions of every kind, and that, to relieve us from the labours under which we were rapidly sinking, we should find the ninth division, composed of twenty-five thousand fresh troops. This city then was the object of our fondest wishes, our most pleasing dreams. Within its walls, the dreadful calamities which now environed us would for ever cease. The name of Smolensko passed from mouth to mouth, and each pronounced it with confidence to those who were

sinking under their sufferings, as their truest, their only consolation. There was magic in the name. It carried with it a happy oblivion of all our past miseries, and inspired us with courage to support the fatigue which we were yet to encounter.

(November 6th.) We marched towards Smolensko, with an ardour which redoubled our strength ; and, approaching Doroghobouï, distant from that city only twenty leagues, the thought that in three days we should reach the end of all our misfortunes, filled us with the most intoxicating joy, when suddenly the atmosphere, which had hitherto been so brilliant, was clouded by cold and dark vapours. The sun, enveloped by the thickest mists, disappeared from our sight, and the snow falling in large flakes, in an instant obscured the day, and confounded the earth with the sky. The wind, furiously blowing, howled dreadfully through the forests, and overwhelmed the firs, already beat down with ice, while the country around, as far as eye could reach, presented unbroken, one white and savage appearance. The soldiers, vainly struggling with the snow and the tempest, which rushed upon them with the force of a whirlwind, could no longer distinguish the road, and, falling into the ditches which bordered it,

there found a grave. The others pressed on towards the end of their journey, scarcely able to drag themselves along, badly mounted, badly clothed, with nothing to eat, nothing to drink, shivering with the cold, and groaning with pain ; becoming selfish through despair, they afforded neither succour, nor even one glance of pity to those who, worn out with fatigue and disease, expired around them. How many unfortunate beings, on that dreadful day, dying of cold and famine, struggled hard with the agonies of death ! We heard some of them, faintly bidding their last adieu to their friends and comrades ; others, as they drew their last breath, pronounced the name of their mothers, their wives, their native country, which they were never more to see. The rigour of the frost soon seized on their benumbed limbs, and penetrated through their whole frame. Stretched on the road, we could distinguish only the heaps of snow which covered them, and which, at almost every step, formed little undulations, like so many graves. At the same time, vast flights of ravens, abandoning the plain to take refuge in the neighbouring forests, croaked mournfully as they passed over our heads ; and troops of dogs, which had followed us from Moscow, and lived solely on our mangled remains, howled around us, as if they would

hasten the period when we were to become their prey.

From that day the army lost its courage and its military attitude. The soldier no longer obeyed his officer, the officer separated himself from his general. The regiments disbanded, marched in disorder. Searching for food, they spread themselves over the plain, burning and destroying whatever fell in their way. The horses fell by thousands.\* The cannon and the waggons abandoned, served only to obstruct the way. No sooner had these soldiers separated from us, than they were assailed by a population eager to avenge the horrors of which it had been the victim. The cossacks came to the succour of the peasants, and drove back to the great road, already filled with the dying and the dead, those of the followers who escaped from the carnage made among them.

Such was the situation of the army, when we arrived at Doroghbouï. This little town would have given new life to our unfortunate troops, if Napoleon had not been so far blinded by the fury of his rage, as to forget, that his soldiers would be the first to suffer by the devastation which he caused to be made. Doroghbouï had

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\* See the Twenty-ninth Bulletin.

been burnt, its magazines pillaged, and the brandy, with which they were filled, had been poured into the streets, while the rest of the army was perishing for want of it. The few houses which remained, were occupied exclusively by a small number of generals and staff-officers. The few soldiers which yet remained to face the enemy, were exposed to all the rigours of the season; while the others, who had wandered from their proper corps, were now repulsed on every side, and found no shelter in any part of the camp. How deplorable was then the situation of these poor wretches! Tormented by hunger, we saw them run after every horse the moment it fell; they devoured it raw, like dogs, and fought among themselves for the mangled limbs. Worn out by fatigue and long marches, they saw nothing around them but the snow; not one spot appeared on which they could sit or lie. Penetrated with the cold, they wandered on every side to find wood, the snow having caused it entirely to disappear. If, fortunately, they found a little, they knew not where to light it. Did they discover a spot less exposed than others, it afforded them but momentary shelter; scarcely had their fire kindled, when the violence of the wind, and the moisture of the atmosphere, suddenly extinguished it,

and deprived them of the only consolation which remained, in their extreme distress. Here we saw a multitude of them, huddled together like beasts, at the root of a beech, or pine, or under a waggon; there, others were employed in tearing down huge branches from the trees, or pulling down by main force, and burning the houses, at which the officers lodged; and, although exhausted by fatigue, the snow afforded them no couch. Through the livelong night they wandered like spectres, or stood immovable around the enormous fires.

The unfortunate Paulowna, whom the reader will recollect, when he calls to mind the pillage of Moscow, had hitherto accompanied us, and shared in all our misfortunes and privations. She endured them with the courage which her virtue inspired. Believing that she carried in her bosom a pledge of love, which she imagined to be legitimate, she was eager to become a mother, and proud to follow her husband. In the meantime, he, who had pledged himself to her by the most solemn promises, having been informed in the morning, that we were to take up our winter-quarters at Smolensko, determined to break a connexion, which he had regarded as merely temporary. Inaccessible to pity, he approached this innocent creature, and,

under some specious pretext, announced to her that they must part. At this intelligence she uttered a cry of surprise and horror, and, quite frantic, declared, that having sacrificed her family, and even her reputation, for him whom she regarded as her husband, it was her duty to follow him, and neither fatigues nor dangers should turn her from a resolution, in which her love and her honour were equally interested. The general, little sensible of the value of an attachment so rare, coldly repeated, that they must part, since circumstances would no longer permit the women to remain with the troops. At these cruel words, his interesting victim felt almost annihilated. Paler than when she rushed from the tombs of the Kremlin, she uttered not a word. She sighed, she wept, and, suffocated by her grief, fell into a state of insensibility ; of this her perfidious seducer took advantage, and, notwithstanding the dangers which surrounded them from the approach of the Russians, whose cries of vengeance he already fancied that he heard, still this hard-hearted wretch was induced to leave the poor unfortunate Paulowna to her fate.

## BOOK VIII.

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### *KRASNOE.*

WHEN Napoleon quitted Moscow, he intended to reunite his troops between Witepsk and Smolensko, and make the Nieper and the Dwina the grand line of his operations. The 6th and 7th of November, having destroyed the third part of his army, he, on his arrival at Smolensko, alleged that destruction, and the inclemency of the winter, as the reasons of his abandoning his former design. But the true and only motive which induced him to change his plan, was the news which he received at Smolensko (10th November), that Wittgenstein had forced the Dwina, that Witepsk had been taken with its garrison, and that the army of Moldavia, united to that of Volhynia, having driven before it the corps of Prince Schwartzenberg, was taking a position on the Beresina with the design of joining Wittgenstein, and effectually cutting off the retreat of

the French army. This manœuvre of the enemy was so well known, and appeared so natural, that the report soon spread through the troops, that it was the intention of the Russians to take Napoleon alive, and to put his whole army to the sword ; wishing, by this severe chastisement, to give Europe an example of the punishment which they deserved who disturbed the world with unjust wars.

In truth, it was not the severity of a premature winter which rendered the plans of Napoleon abortive, because if he could have maintained himself between Smolensko and Witepsk, he would easily have repaired the losses which he had hitherto suffered. The principal, and the only, cause of his ruin, was his determination to proceed to Moscow, without considering what he left behind him ; and his doing, at the price of our blood, that which the most headstrong and imprudent monarch\* had not dared to attempt.

The desire to pillage that capital, and the ambition to dictate there his laws, made him sacrifice every thing. He rushed on, eager to destroy the ancient palace of the Czars ; forgetful

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\* Charles XII. of Sweden.

of the winter, and all its horrors ; forgetful that Wittgenstein had never abandoned the Dwina ; and that Tschikakoff, returned from Moldavia, would attack him on his retreat from his foolish expedition.

Napoleon, ignorant as yet of the progress which the enemy had made on the Dwina, determined that the fourth corps should pass the Nieper, and march on Witepsk, to effect a junction with the garrison of that town, commanded by General Pouget. After reconnoitring whether the approach of winter had still left this route practicable, General Samson, with some engineers which he commanded, was ordered to traverse the country, and examine particularly the borders of the Wop. These officers had scarcely passed the Nieper, when they fell into the hands of a party of cossacks, with whom all its banks were infested.

(November 7th.) While the fourth corps proceeded in the direction of Witepsk, we left Doroghobouï, and passed the Borysthenes on a bridge of rafts, opposite that village. The horses found the greatest difficulty in climbing the opposite bank : the road was become as slippery as glass, and these animals, already exhausted, were no longer able to draw. Twelve or sixteen horses harnessed to one cannon had scarcely

strength to drag it over the smallest hill. It was intended to proceed the first day as far as Zazelé ; but the road was so execrably bad, that even on the following morning, the waggons had scarcely reached the sixth league. Many cannon and horses were of necessity abandoned ; and it was on that cruel night that the soldiery, no longer under controul, began to pillage the baggage. The ground was covered with portmanteaus, boxes, and papers ; and many articles stolen from Moscow, which from shame had hitherto been concealed, now saw the light.

The beautiful *chateau* of Zazelé presented us, during the night, with a repetition of the scenes of yesterday. With the exception of those whom the pillage of the waggons had reanimated, we saw nothing on every side, but people dying of hunger, and of cold ; and horses tormented by thirst, endeavouring to break the ice with their feet, to find that water which we were unable to give them.

(November 8th.) Our baggage was so considerable, that the losses which it had sustained were yet scarcely felt. We advanced all day, and with much alacrity, for we thought that, having quitted the great road of Smolensko, we were pursuing one which had less of the calamities of war. We hoped that we might now

meet with some villages, which might shelter us from the inclemency of the night, where our famished troops might find refreshment, and especially where we might procure some forage for our meagre horses. But this flattering hope was soon destroyed. The village of Sloboda, where we were to sleep, presented us with new horrors. Every thing was destroyed, and the cossacks, hanging on our flanks, seized, and pillaged or massacred, every one who, urged by necessity, wandered but a little way from the ranks to seek for food. In these dreadful circumstances, General Danthouard, whose talents had before proved so useful, appeared to multiply himself, and to be present wherever danger threatened. He caused our artillery to act with effect, on every point where it could be brought to bear ; when, passing our lines, a cannon ball fractured his right thigh, after having killed the orderly soldier who was by his side.

The Viceroy, knowing that we ought to cross the Wop on the following day, had sent General Poitevin forward in the night, with some engineers, to construct a bridge for our passage. We arrived on the banks of the river at an early hour on the Morrow, when, to the great grief of the Prince, and our utter despair, we saw the whole army and the baggage ranged along the Wop,

without being able to pass it. The bridge had been begun, and nearly finished, but the waters had suddenly increased during the night, and carried it away.

The cossacks whom we had seen the night before did not fail to advance upon us, when they were apprised of our critical situation. We already heard the fire of our sharp-shooters, who endeavoured to keep them at bay ; but the noise of the fire-arms rapidly approaching, convinced us that the boldness of the enemy increased at the sight of our dangers. In the meantime the Viceroy, whose noble soul was always calm in the midst of the greatest dangers, maintained a presence of mind most important in circumstances so desperate. To reanimate the spirits of the soldiers, who were more terrified at the presence of the cossacks, than at the dangers of the Wop, he despatched some chosen troops, who, maintaining themselves against the Russians on our flanks, and on our rear, left us at liberty to attempt the passage of the river.

The Prince, seeing that it was necessary that some officer of rank should set an example of courage, in crossing first, ordered Colonel Delfanti to place himself at the head of the royal guard, and to pass the ford of the Wop. That brave officer, whose intrepidity cannot be too

highly praised, seized with ardour this opportunity of shewing his devotion to the service ; and in the sight of all our corps, with the water reaching to his waist, he made his way through the accumulated ice, at the head of the grenadiers, and surmounted every difficulty.

The Viceroy immediately followed with his staff, and, having arrived at the other side, he issued the necessary orders to facilitate a passage so dangerous. The waggons now began to file off. The first passed happily over, and after them, a few pieces of artillery. But as the channel was far below the level of the ground, and the banks steep and glittering with ice, the only practicable point was where some steps had been dug to descend to the river. The cannon, all passing in the same track, formed ruts so deep, that it was impossible to drag them out. Thus the only accessible ford was soon choked up, and rendered utterly impracticable for the rest of the artillery and baggage.

In this situation, all yielded themselves up to despair ; for in spite of the efforts made by our rear-guard to repulse the Russians, it was but too evident that they advanced : our very fear doubled our danger. The river was only half frozen ; and as the waggons could not possibly cross it, it was necessary for those who had no

horses, to determine to throw themselves into the stream. Our situation was the more deplorable, as we were forced to abandon a hundred pieces of cannon, a great number of ammunition and provision waggons, carts, and *drouschki*,\* which contained the little which remained to us of the provisions of Moscow. As soon as the necessity became thus apparent, every one abandoned his carriage, and hastily loaded his horse with his most valuable effects. But scarcely had any one resolved to leave his carriage, than a crowd of soldiers gave the owner no time to select what he thought proper: they violently seized on it, and in a moment robbed it of every thing which it contained, principally searching for flour and brandy. The artillery-men abandoned their pieces, and, on the report that the enemy approached quickly, spiked them; despairing to convey them across a river, every part of which was choked with waggons, buried in the clay, and the bodies of innumerable soldiers and horses, who had been carried away by the stream. The cries of those who were passing the river, the consternation of others who were preparing to descend, and whom, with their horses, we

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\* An elegant little carriage much used at Moscow.

every moment saw overwhelmed by the current, the despair of the women, the cries of the children, and the terror even of the soldiers, rendered this passage a scene so horrible, that the very recollection of it yet terrifies those who witnessed it.

Although it is most painful to recall to memory the dreadful circumstances which accompanied it, I cannot prevail on myself to forbear recounting one trait of maternal love, so touching, and so honourable to human nature, that the sight of it compensated for the affliction which those unfortunate beings occasioned me.

A female sutler of our corps, who had been with us the whole campaign, returned from Moscow, carrying in a waggon, five young children, and all the fruit of her industry. Arrived at the Wop, she regarded with horror, the rapid stream, which compelled her to leave on its banks, all her little fortune, and the future subsistence of her children. For a long time she ran up and down, eagerly looking for a new passage, when, returning in despair from her fruitless search, she said to her husband, “ We must indeed abandon all; let us now try only how to save our infants.” Saying this, she took the two youngest from the waggon, and placed them in her husband’s arm. I saw the

poor father closely hug the innocent creatures, and, with a trembling foot, traverse the river, while his wife, on her kness at the edge of the water, now gazed eagerly on him, and then raised her eyes to heaven, and as soon as she saw him safely landed, she clasped her hands with joy, and leaping on her feet, exclaimed with transport, "They are saved, they are saved." The anxious father, depositing his precious burden on the bank, hastened back, caught two more in his arms, and again plunging into the waves, followed by his wife, who bore the fifth on one arm, and with the other hand clung fast to the garment of her husband, thus they reached the shore in safety. The children who were first carried over, thinking themselves abandoned by their parents, had made the air resound with their cries, but their tears soon ceased to flow, when the affectionate family was again reunited, and the parents, though deprived of all their little property, thought themselves most happy in preserving those whom they loved. Night approaching, we quitted this place of desolation, and encamped near a wretched village, half a league from the banks of the Wop. Often in the night, we heard the lamentable cries of those who were yet attempting their passage.

We had left the fourteenth division on the

other side, to hold the enemy in check, and to endeavour to save some part of the immense baggage, which we had abandoned. I was sent on the morrow, to recall this division, and was thus enabled to perceive all the extent of our loss. For more than a league, nothing was to be seen on the road, and the banks of the river, but ammunition-waggons, pieces of artillery, and the most elegant carriages, which had been bought at Moscow. The articles with which these waggons had been filled, and which were too heavy to be now carried away, were heaped on every side. I saw many figures of antique bronze, chandeliers of the greatest value, original and exquisite paintings, and the richest and most esteemed porcelain. I saw, among the rest, a cup of the most beautiful workmanship, on which was depicted the sublime composition of Marcus Sextus. I took it, and drank from it some of the water of the Wop, full of dirt and ice. After I had thus used it, I cast it from me with indifference, near the place where I had found it.

Our troops had scarcely quitted the other bank when clouds of cossacks, no longer finding any opposition, advanced to the river. Many unhappy wretches yet remained behind, who, feeble and diseased, had been unable to pass the ford.

Although our enemies were now surrounded, and oppressed with plunder, they yet stripped their miserable prisoners, and left them naked on the snow. From the opposite banks, we could see the cossacks, sharing among themselves the bloody spoils. If their courage had equalled their love of pillage, the Wop would not have defended us from their attacks. But these cowardly assailants were always stopped by a few bayonets, and rapidly fled as soon as the artillery played upon them.

The last night had been truly dreadful. To form some idea of it, the reader must picture to himself an army encamped on the bare snow, in the midst of the severest winter, closely pursued by the enemy, and having neither artillery nor cavalry to oppose to him. The soldiers without shoes, and almost without clothes, were enfeebled by fatigue and famine. Sitting on their knapsacks, they slept on their knees. From this benumbing posture they rose not, but to broil some slices of horse-flesh, or to melt a few morsels of ice. Often they had no wood, and, to make their fires, they destroyed the houses in which the generals lodged, and sometimes, when we awoke in the morning, the village which we had seen the night before, had disappeared, and towns, which to-day were untouched, would form

on the morrow one vast conflagration. In the midst of these sufferings, the Viceroy, always at our head, never lost his calmness and serenity of mind. More unhappy than we were, enduring comparatively more privations, he was always cheerful, and preserved his presence of mind amidst the greatest dangers, offering at the same time, in his own example, the most perfect model of military discipline.

The cossacks, perceiving that we had quitted our position, soon crossed the river, and attacked our rear. The fourteenth division, which had preserved twelve pieces of cannon, formed the rear-guard, and repulsed the enemy. In the meantime the Prince and his officers endeavoured to reduce to some order, and to entice back to their ranks, those soldiers whom misery had forced to leave their colours to search for food. They attempted this, however, without success. The number of the stragglers was so great, that it was not possible, either to arrest or to check them; and even when some of them returned to their duty, the desertion soon recommenced; hunger, imperious hunger, soon seduced them again from their colours, and threw all our columns into confusion. The more enfeebled we became, the more enterprising were our adversaries. Their attacks on

our rear-guard were almost incessant, and frequently we were compelled to halt, and contend against superior forces, which endeavoured to overwhelm us on every side.

The rear of our column was briskly pressed, when the royal guard which formed its head, was stopped before Dukhovchtchina, by some squadrons of cossacks, which, issuing from the town, deployed in the plain, as if they would surround us. Seeing that we were thus pressed on every side, our corps became in such disorder, that it resembled one immense crowd, half of which were sick or disarmed. In the meantime the enemy maintained his ground on one side of us, and on the other attacked us with vigour. But the Prince, preserving at all times his courage unbroken, formed the Italian guard, and the Bavarian dragoons and light horse into a square, which, marching in platoons, drove back the cossacks, and permitted us to enter into Dukhovchtchina. The thirteenth division was formed in column close to these troops, in spite of the multitude of stragglers, which, pressing on all sides, impeded every manœuvre. To accelerate the march of the army, the Prince himself watched during the night, and superintended the repairs of an old bridge, which arrested our progress. To encourage the engineers, he even

condescended to assist at the work, while every privation to which he exposed himself, rendered him dearer to those whom he commanded.

The little town of Dukhovchtchina, through which our army had not before passed,\* had escaped the general destruction. The inhabitants, flying at our approach, left us some provisions, which we eagerly collected, coarse as they were. But what rendered them most precious, was the opportunity of preparing them in some human habitation, and enjoying for a little while a shelter from the excessive cold of a piercing wind.

The Viceroy despatched an officer towards Smolensko to announce to Napoleon the disasters which we had experienced on the Wop. It was, doubtless, to await the reply of the Emperor, and to know whether we were yet to continue our march upon Witepsk, that we were permitted to enjoy one day's rest at Dukhovchtchina. But when that officer did not return, it was determined that we should recommence our march at two o'clock on the following morning. We had been undisturbed during the whole of the day, but at ten o'clock at night, while we were

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\* Excepting the cavalry commanded by General Grouchy, and the division of Pino when it returned from Porietsch.

indulging in a sweet repose, to which we had been so long unaccustomed, the cossacks appeared before the town, and carried away some pieces of cannon, near the fires of our out-posts. Many picquets were surprised ; those of the 106th regiment, placed before a church, suffered considerable loss ; but the presence of the Viceroy soon repaired the disorder which so unexpected an attack had occasioned. The troops were immediately collected, and directed on every position which could be favourable to us in a nocturnal encounter. This attack was followed by nothing of consequence, for it was made by the cossacks, who took care to be far enough away, when they perceived that we were taking measures to punish their temerity.

(November 12th.) The hour of departure being arrived, we set fire to Dukhovchtchina, whose houses had been so useful to us. Although sufficiently accustomed to all the effects of a conflagration, we could not restrain our astonishment at the horrible, yet superb spectacle, which it now presented, amid the shades of a forest covered with snow, and strangely illumined by torrents of flames. The trees, covered with a sheet of ice, dazzled the sight, and produced, as with a prism, the most vivid and variegated colours. The branches of the birch, drooping

to the ground like the weeping willow, appeared like beautiful chandeliers, while the icicles, melted by the heat, seemed to scatter around us a shower of brilliant and sparkling diamonds.

In the midst of a scene full of splendid horror, our troops reunited, and proceeded from the town on the road to Smolensko. Although the night was unusually dark, the flames that ascended from the neighbouring villages, which had been also destroyed, formed so many auroræ-boreales, and, till the dawn of day, shed a frightful glare upon our march. Beyond Toporovo, we left on our right the road of Pologhi, which we had followed when we came from Smolensko to Doroghbouï. The snow that covered all the country had nearly buried the villages, which formed from afar only a black spot, on one unbroken surface of white. The difficulty of approaching them, saved many from the general desolation. When I compared these peaceful asylums with the torments to which we were a prey, I could not refrain from exclaiming, "Happy people! exempt from ambition, you live tranquil and undisturbed, while we are fast sinking under the most frightful calamities. The winter preserves your existence, but it devotes us to death. When the sweet spring shall have accomplished your deliverance, you

" will see our carcasses bleaching on the plain,  
" and you will be doubly happy in having suf-  
" fered so little from our tyranny, and in having  
" added nothing to the weight of our misfor-  
" tunes."

The little river Khmost was frozen when we crossed it, and the bridge, which was yet entire, enabled us to pass on, without delay or danger. Arriving at Wolodimerowa, the Viceroy established himself in a *chateau* a little above the village, where he had lodged on our former march. Encamping around him, we were certain that the cossacks, who had flanked our route during the day, would halt on the height not far distant from us, and accordingly they soon drove in our foragers, who, urged by imperious necessity, had spread themselves through the neighbouring villages in search of food.

(November 13th.) We were now only one day's journey from Smolensko, where abundance was to succeed to want, and repose to fatigue. Impatient to enjoy a happiness so long desired, we left Volodimerowa long before day, burning, as was our custom, the cottages which had afforded us an asylum. Arrived at the heights of Stabna, where the road of Dkhovchtchina joins with that of Witepsk, we experienced an almost insuperable difficulty in ascending the mountain.

On every side, where we attempted to climb, we found one solid mass of ice, bright, and slippery as glass. Men and horses rolled over one another; and, happy were they who, after the utmost exertion, could extricate themselves from the dreadful pass. Before we arrived at Smolensko, where all our misfortunes were to have an end, the most melancholy scenes presented themselves every instant, and made us wish the more to reach that city, the object of our most ardent prayers. Among the sports of cruel fortune, none had more cause to complain than the French women, who, following us from Moscow to escape the vengeance of the Russians, hoped to find with us certain protection. Most of them on foot, with shoes of stuff, little calculated to defend them from the frozen snow, and clad in old robes of silk, or the thinnest muslin, were glad to cover themselves with tattered pieces of military cloaks, torn from the dead bodies of the soldiers. Their situation would have drawn tears from the hardest hearts, if dire necessity had not stifled, in every bosom, the feelings of humanity. Among all the victims of the horrors of war, no one inspired greater interest than the young and touching Fanny. Beautiful, affectionate, amiable, and sprightly, speaking many different languages, and possessing

every quality calculated to seduce the most insensible heart, she now begged for the most menial employment, and the morsel of bread which she obtained drew from her the most rapturous expressions of gratitude. Imploring succour from us all, she was compelled to submit to the vilest abuse; and, though her soul loathed the prostitution, she every night belonged to him who would charge himself with her support. I saw her when we quitted Smolensko. She was no longer able to walk. She was clinging to the tail of a horse, and was thus dragged along. At length her powers were quite exhausted ; she fell on the snow, and there remained unburied, without exciting one emotion of compassion, or obtaining one look of pity, so debased were our souls now become, and our sensibility quite extinguished. But what need of more testimonies of the calamities which befell us ; we were all fellow-sufferers.

It was horrible to see and to hear the enormous dogs, with shaggy hair, which, driven from the villages that we had burnt, followed us along our march. Dying with hunger, they uttered one incessant and frightful howl, and often disputed with the soldiers for the carcasses of the horses which fell on our route. In addition to this, the ravens, with which Russia is filled,

attracted by the scent of the dead bodies, hovered over us in black and innumerable crowds, and by their cries of mournful presage, struck the stoutest hearts with terror.

Happily we were only two leagues from Smolensko, and the tower of its celebrated church, which we already saw at a distance, flattering us with the sweetest illusions, seemed the most lovely object in the whole perspective. An hour before we arrived, we left the fourteenth division, with the few Bavarian horse which remained, to observe and hold in check the cossacks, who, increasing every moment in number, seemed determined to follow us to the very walls of Smolensko. But what was our grief, when we learnt, in the very suburbs of the city, that the ninth corps was gone, that it had not even halted at Smolensko, and that the provisions were all consumed. A thunderbolt falling at our feet would have confounded us less than did this news. Our senses were for a moment suspended. We would not believe the fact; but our eyes soon gave us sad confirmation of the truth, when we saw the garrison of Smolensko eagerly rushing out, and immediately devouring the horses which every moment dropped, exhausted with fatigue and hunger. We then no longer doubted that famine reigned

in that city, which, till this moment, we had regarded as the abode of plenty.

As we were musing on the sadness of our lot, its rigour was somewhat alleviated by the promise of a little rice, flour, and biscuit, which yet remained in the magazines. The hope of this reanimated our drooping courage, when suddenly we were filled with new consternation. We had scarcely arrived within the gates of Smolensko, when crowds of stragglers, covered with blood, rushed upon us, and announced that the cossacks were only two hundred paces distant. The next moment Captain Tresel, aid-de-camp to General Guilleminot, who had been left behind with the fourteenth division, came at full speed. He apprised us that that division had taken up a position in a castle, in a wood which commanded the road ; that the enemy had surrounded it, but that being perfectly intrenched round the castle, and the approaches being defended by pallisades, the cossacks despaired of attacking them with success, and retired to fall upon the stragglers ; that they had speedily overtaken them, had massacred some, and wounded a great number. The road was covered with these miserable wretches, and presented a spectacle well calculated to excite our liveliest compassion. We saw them, more-

over, at a distance, descending the mountain of Smolensko. The descent was so rapid, and the frost had rendered it so slippery, that numbers of these unfortunate beings, unable to support themselves, rolled down the declivity, and immediately perished.

Having left the royal guard on this height, to protect the division of Brossier, which formed the rear-guard, we descended toward the Nieper, and endeavoured to enter the town. Beyond the bridge was the junction of the road of Dorogho-bouï, with that from Valentina, which all the other divisions had taken, and as these corps had not passed the Wop, they yet retained a great part of their artillery and baggage. These numerous carriages, which flocked in on every side, mingled with the foot-soldiers and the cavalry, and all of them attempting to rush into Smolensko, where they had been promised some rations of bread, the greatest confusion ensued ; the entrance was completely choked up, and more than three hours elapsed ere we could penetrate into the town.

(November 13.) The wind was tempestuous, and the cold excessive. We were assured that the thermometer was more than twenty-two degrees below the freezing point. In spite of this, every one ran into the streets, hoping to be able

to purchase provisions. Smolensko was built at the back of a mountain, and the side of the hill was so slippery, that it was necessary to crawl on our knees, and to hold by the rocks, which projected above the snow, in order to gain the summit. We at length reached the top, where we found the great square, and those houses which had suffered least by the conflagration. Although the weather was insupportably severe, we sought rather for food than for lodging. Some soldiers of the garrison, to whom a little bread had been distributed, were compelled, by force, to sell it to us. Others supplicated those who had bought it, to spare a part, and soldiers and officers, mingled together, were ravenously devouring, in the streets, every kind of provision which they could procure, however coarse or disgusting. In the meantime the cossacks arrived. We distinctly perceived them scouring the heights, and firing on the troops which defiled below the town. Our fourth division being actively engaged with them, the Viceroy was eager to transport himself to that point. He was accompanied, along a difficult and perilous road, by General Gifflange, and by his aides-de-camp, Tacher, Labedoyère, and Mejean, and by Corner, officer of artillery; all indefatigable in misfortune, and ready to brave the greatest dangers.

We had great difficulty in finding shelter; the houses being few, and the crowd, which was to occupy them, immense. At length, heaped one upon another, in the great halls, whose arches had defied the flames, we waited with impatience for the distribution of the bread. But the formalities, necessary to be gone through, were so long, that night came on ere any thing was distributed. It was now necessary to run anew into the streets, and, with money in our hands, seek for something to support our existence, in the quarters of the imperial guard; who, more favoured than the rest of the army, often rolled in abundance when we were destitute of every comfort.

Thus, Smolensko, which we had thought would have been the termination of our misfortunes, cruelly deceived our dearest hopes, and became the witness of our greatest disgraces, and our most profound despair. The soldiers who could not find a shelter, encamped in the middle of the streets, and some hours after were found dead around the fires which they had kindled. The hospitals, the churches, and the other public buildings, were unable to contain the sick, who presented themselves by thousands. These unhappy beings, exposed to all the rigours of a frosty night, lay uncovered on the waggons,

or in the ammunition-carts, or perished in vainly searching for an asylum. In fine, when every thing had been promised us at Smolensko, nothing had been provided, to enable us to maintain ourselves there; nothing had been prepared to relieve and comfort an army whose salvation depended on that place alone. Hence despair seized upon us: we thought only how to save our wretched existence; honour and duty were forgotten, or rather we were no longer disposed to submit to the commands of a rash sovereign, who never troubled himself to provide bread for those who had sacrificed their lives to gratify his ambition. We saw those who were once the gayest, and the most intrepid, entirely lose that character. They predicted only disasters and dangers.\* One thought occupied their minds—that country which they were never again to see; one object filled their view—that death which every moment threatened them. With a mournful presentiment, each inquired tremblingly, and with the most profound mystery, where were the armies to which we looked for deliverance? “Where ‘is the Duke of Reggio?’” one secretly asked his companion.—“He wished to have protected

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\* See the Twenty-ninth Bulletin.

“ the Dwina, but he was forced to abandon  
“ Polotsk, and to fall back upon Lessel,” was the  
whispered reply.—“ And where is the Duke of  
“ Belluno?”—“ He could not leave Sienna.”—  
“ And where the Russian army of Wolhynia?”  
—“ It has repulsed Prince Schwartzenberg; it  
“ has made itself master of Minsk, and it is ad-  
“ vancing against us.”—“ Ah! if this news be  
“ true,” repeated the first to himself, “ our  
“ situation is truly desperate; and, should we  
“ continue on the borders of the Nieper, or the  
“ Beresina, one great battle will complete our  
“ ruin.” But what melancholy presages tor-  
mented us, when a confused murmur spread the  
report, that the whole of France was agitated,  
that the town of Nantes had been destroyed,  
and that Paris, where, during nearly twenty  
years, the fate of Europe had been decided,  
was also in a state of commotion, which made  
us tremble for the fate of our beloved country!  
We were informed that certain men, known for  
their love of democracy, had conceived the pro-  
ject of spreading a false report of the death of  
Napoleon, and the entire destruction of his  
army; and, profiting by the grief and consterna-  
tion which this news would occasion, to over-  
throw the existing authorities, and to erect a  
government which would be subservient to their

views. If this design had been conceived by honest and patriotic men, by those who were emulous to render themselves illustrious by the deliverance of their country, and who sought to dethrone the Emperor, that they might preserve their country from the disgrace of hereafter owing its freedom to those whom it called its enemies, certainly such a project would have been truly heroic. But, instead of an enterprise so noble, we were told that the conspirators wished to deliver us from despotism, that they might plunge us into the horrors of anarchy. Then, far from lamenting the temporary evils to which our native land was again exposed, we should have rejoiced that they would have been the means of delivering it from an odious tyranny. The political perfidy of our oppressor had caused the fate of the people to depend solely on his will, and by his monstrous ambition, France was at war with the whole human race. As we lay under some wretched thatch, and indulged in many a melancholy reflection, we were suddenly roused by unexpected cries. “‘Rise, rise ; they ‘‘ pillage the magazines.’’ Springing immediately on our feet, and seizing a sack, a panier, or a bottle, we exclaimed to each other, as we rushed out, “I will go to the flour magazine, “you go to the magazine of brandy ; let the

"servants run to the place where the meat, the biscuit, the peas, are kept." In an instant the room was empty. After a considerable interval, our friends returned, and informed us, that the soldiers, dying with hunger, and no longer able to await the dilatory distribution of the provisions, had, in spite of the guard, forced the gates of the magazines, and began to pillage them. Some came back with their clothes covered with flour, and even pierced with the bayonet, bearing on their shoulders sacks of flour, which they had taken by force from the soldiers who were dividing it. Others entered, harassed with fatigue, and deposited on the table a great panier of biscuit, or, what was better, an enormous leg of beef. An hour after, the domestics followed them, bringing rice, peas, and brandy. At the unexpected view of such abundance, our hearts once more expanded. One laughed with joy, as he kneaded his bread, another sung as he cooked his meat, but most of them, eagerly seizing the brandy, caused gaiety to succeed to the most distressing sadness. Although the weather was beautifully clear, the air was so exceedingly piercing, that it froze us as we passed the streets. At every step were seen the dead bodies of the soldiers, stretched on the snow, who, harassed by fatigue, had

perished of cold, as they were searching for a place of repose. All these disasters, and especially our stay at Smolensko, remind me of the death of Colonel Battaglia, commandant of the guard of honour of Italy. I have long reproached myself, with not having interested the feelings of my readers, by recounting the misfortunes of that distinguished corps. The rapidity of my narration has hitherto prevented me from occupying myself with the calamities of individuals, while I was oppressed and overpowered by the recollection of those which were endured by the whole army. At this epoch, that corps was completely annihilated, and, ere I quit the fatal walls of Smolensko, I will succinctly recount its history. It was composed of young men, selected from the first families in Italy, and whose parents allowed them a pension of twelve hundred francs, when they entered the corps. It was an honour to be admitted into the regiment, as its very name testified.

We found among them the most brilliant talents, united to the greatest fortune. Many of them were the only sons of illustrious families. To the titles which they derived from their ancestors, they added a well-cultivated understanding, and every quality which bid fair ultimately to form the most distinguished military characters.

In this school were educated the best informed and the most excellent officers of the Italian army. They acquired experience in submitting to the rules of their corps, which, while it gave them the rank of sub-lieutenants, obliged them to perform the service of private soldiers.

This corps conducted itself well on every occasion, and was remarkable for its fine appearance and good discipline, but it suffered more than any other, by the privations attendant on this memorable campaign. The guards of honour, unused to shoe their horses, or to mend their garments, or their boots, were obliged to suffer these degradations, when the artificers and domestics attached to their regiment, were no more. Their horses, dead of hunger and labour, and themselves wearing enormous and heavy boots, were unable long to support the fatigue of our continual marches. Confounded with the stragglers, they remained in the rear, without food and without lodging. In this manner the descendants of the noblest families, born to the happiest destinies, perished far more miserably than the common soldiers : for their education and their habits ill-disposed them to submit to the menial and degrading offices, by which others gained a scanty morsel, and prolonged a wretched life. Here we saw some of them wrapped in the tattered

fragments of their cloaks ; others, mounted on sorry cognias,\* suddenly fainted from weakness and want, and fell to rise no more. Out of the 350, of which they were originally composed, all, except five, perished in the most deplorable manner ; but, they had this consolation, that they possessed the pity and the esteem of the Prince, who formed them at first, and who now sighed over the calamities, which the fatal circumstances of the campaign would not permit him to alleviate.

(November 14th.) The Emperor, who was at Smolensko when we arrived there, received every day disastrous news of his armies. That which most affected him, was the defeat of General Baraguay D'Hilliers, sent on the road of Kailuga, with General Augereau, to combat with Count Orloff Denisoff, who threatened to cut off our retreat between Smolensko and Krasnoë. Not knowing how to bear up against so many disgraces, Napoleon, on that day, and for the first time, held a grand council, at which all the generals of division and marshals of the empire assisted. As soon as the council was broken up, he burnt part of his equipage, and immediately

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\* Cognia, in the Polish language, signifies a horse ; and, as the horses of Russia are very small, they distinguished ours by the name of Cognia.

departed in his carriage, accompanied by his chasseurs, and by the Polish lancers of the guard. It was reported at the close of the council, that we were to march to-morrow with the first corps, and that the third was to remain behind to blow up the fortifications of the town, and to form our rear-guard. The same day, the Viceroy was long closeted with the chief of his staff, and we awaited with anxiety the result of all these conferences.

(November 15th.) The order was given to continue our march, but at a very advanced hour, from the delay occasioned by the dilatory distribution of the contents of the magazines. Our women, whose sufferings only added to our misfortunes, were left at Smolensko. Dreadful situation, since these unfortunate beings well knew that the remains of the town would be sacked, the houses delivered to the flames, and the churches undermined. We soon, however, heard, that the Hetman Platoff, entering unexpectedly into the town, had prevented our rear-guard from executing the inhuman order.

Marching from Smolensko, a spectacle the most horrible was presented to our view. From that point till we arrived at a wretched ruined hamlet,\* at the distance of about three leagues, the

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\* On inspecting the map, this appears to be Loubna.

road was entirely covered with cannon and ammunition-waggons, which they had merely time to spike, or to blow up. Horses in the agonies of death were seen at every step, and sometimes whole teams, sinking under their labours, fell together. All the defiles which the carriages could not pass, were filled with muskets, helmets, and breast-plates. Trunks broken open, portmanteaus torn to pieces, and garments of every kind, were scattered over the valley. From time to time trees were seen, at the foot of which the soldiers had attempted to light a fire, but the poor wretches had perished ere they could accomplish their object. We saw them stretched by dozens around the green branches which they had vainly attempted to kindle ; and so numerous were the bodies which obstructed the road, that many soldiers were employed in throwing them into the ditches and the ruts.

These horrors, far from exciting our sensibility, only hardened our hearts. Our cruelty, which could not be exercised on the enemy, was extended to our companions. The best friends no longer recognised each other. Whoever discovered the least sickness, if he had not good horses and faithful servants, was sure never to see his country again. Every one preferred to save the *plunder of Moscow*, rather than the life of his

comrade. On all sides we heard the groans of the dying, and the lamentable cries of those whom we had abandoned. But every one was deaf to their cries, or if he approached those who were on the point of expiring, it was to plunder, not to assist them ; it was to search whether they had any remains of food, and not to afford them relief.

Arrived at Loubna, we were able to save from destruction two miserable barns, one for the Viceroy, and the other for his staff. We had scarcely established ourselves there, when we heard before us a loud cannonade. As the noise appeared to come from our right, some thought that it was an engagement with the ninth corps, which, not having been able to relieve Witepsk, was obliged to retreat before a superior force ; but those who were best acquainted with the country, believed that it was the Emperor and his guard, who had been attacked by Prince Kutzusoff, before his arrival at Krasnoë. That Prince had marched from Elnia, and passed our army while we halted at Smolensko. We can scarcely imagine a picture more deplorable than the bivouac of the staff. Twenty-one officers, confounded with as many servants, had crept together round a little fire, under an execrable cart-house scarcely covered. Behind them were the horses ranged in a circle, that they might be

some defence against the violence of the wind, which blew with fury. The smoke was so thick that we could merely see the figures of those who were close to the fire, and who were employed in blowing the coals on which they cooked their food. The rest, wrapped in their pelisses or their cloaks, lay one upon another, as some protection from the cold ; nor did they stir, except to rail at those who trod upon them as they passed to the horses, which kicked whenever a spark fell on their coats.

(November 16th.) We recommenced our march before the dawn of day, and the road was again covered with the wrecks of our baggage and artillery. The horses could no longer draw, and we were obliged to abandon our cannon at the foot of the slightest hill. The only duty which then remained to the artillery-men, was to scatter the powder of the cartridges, and to spike the pieces, lest the enemy should turn them all against us. We were reduced to this extremity when, at the distance of two hours' march from Krasnoë, the Generals Poitevin and Guyon, who were in the van-guard, saw a Russian officer coming towards them, followed by a trumpeter, who, sounding a parley, announced that a herald was advancing. Surprised at an appearance so unexpected, General Guyon halted, and, permit-

ting the officer to approach, demanded whence he came, and what was the object of his mission : “ I come,” said he, “ from General Miloradowitch, “ to tell you, that yesterday we beat Napoleon, “ with the imperial guard, and that to-day the “ Viceroy is surrounded by an army of twenty “ thousand men. He cannot escape us, and if “ he will surrender, we offer him honourable “ terms.” To this General Guyon replied with indignation, “ Return quickly whence you came, “ and announce to those who sent you, that if “ you have twenty thousand men, we have “ here eighty thousand.” These words, uttered with a confident air, so confounded the herald, that he immediately returned to the camp from whence he came.

While this was going on the Viceroy arrived, and listened to the intelligence with mingled surprise and indignation. Although he had, no doubt, some knowledge of the serious affair which had taken place on the day before, between the advanced-guard of Kutusoff, and the imperial guard, yet, reflecting on the boasting manner in which this had been related, he conceived the hope, that by forcing a passage, he might in a short time rejoin the Emperor. He was likewise fully determined to fall honourably in the field, rather than accept of conditions incompatible with

his fame. He immediately ordered the fourteenth division to front the enemy, carrying with them the only two pieces of cannon which remained ; then taking General Guilleminot, he conferred with him for a long time, and the result of their conference was, that we should absolutely cut our way. In the meantime our troops had marched on, and the Russians, permitting them to advance to the very foot of the hill on which they were encamped, suddenly unmasked their batteries, and directed them on our squares. The cossacks, soon after descending from their position, completed the destruction of our troops, and captured their cannon, of which they had made but few discharges, through want of ammunition.

General Ornano advanced across the fire of the enemy, with the remains of the thirteenth division, to succour the troops of the fourteenth, which were so cruelly beaten, when a cannon-ball passed close by him, and struck him from his horse. The soldiers thought that he was dead, and ran forward to plunder him, when they perceived that he was only stunned by the violence of the fall. The Prince then sent his aide-de-camp, Colonel Delfanti, to endeavour to reanimate the troops. That brave officer, rushing forward amidst a shower of balls and grape-shot,

encouraged his soldiers by his exhortations, and by his example, when, receiving two dangerous wounds, he was compelled to retire from the ranks. A surgeon having applied a slight dressing, he retreated with pain from the field of battle. On his way he met Monsieur de Villeblanche, who, in the capacity of auditor of the council of state, had quitted the town of Smolensko, of which he was the intendant, with General Charpentier, who was the governor. Unfortunately he had obtained leave of the Viceroy to accompany him. This generous young man, perceiving Colonel Delfanti wounded, and leaning on an officer, listened to the dictates of his sensibility, and offered him his arm also. As all three were slowly retiring from the field, a cannon-ball struck the colonel between the shoulders, and carried off the head of the brave Villeblanche. Thus perished two young men, who, in different professions, had proved their talents and their courage. The first fell a victim to his bravery, the other to his humanity. The Prince, deeply affected by this unhappy catastrophe, shewed the regard which he felt for the memory of Colonel Delfanti, by an act of benevolence towards the author of his being ; and he would have afforded the same consolation to the father of Ville-

blanche, if the death of his only son had not shortly brought him to his grave.

Many officers of distinguished merit perished on that bloody day. We particularly regretted Major D'Oreille, whose intrepidity was so well known, and the captain of engineers, Morlincourt, whose modesty was equal to his talents. The cannonade yet continued and carried destruction through all our ranks. The field of battle was covered with the dead and the dying. Great numbers of the wounded, abandoning their stations, took refuge in the rear, and increased the crowd of stragglers. The firing, which had proved fatal to our first ranks, extended its ravages to the rear of our army, where we left the dismounted officers. The Captains Bordoni and Mastini perished there. They constituted a part of the small number of the Italian guards that yet remained.

The Viceroy, seeing the obstinacy with which the enemy disputed our passage, pretended, by a skilful movement, to prolong the engagement on our left, by rallying and reuniting all that remained of the fourteenth division; and, while the enemy concentrated the greater part of their forces on this point, to surround and cut off that division, the Prince took advantage of the close

of day to file off to the right with the royal guard, which had not been engaged. In that march Colonel Kliski gave a remarkable proof of presence of mind. He was familiar with the Russian language, and marched in the van-guard of the column. Suddenly he was stopped by a scout of the enemy, who cried in Russian, "Who goes there?" That intrepid officer, not at all embarrassed by a rencontre so unfortunate, advanced towards the sentinel, and said to him in his own language, "Hold your tongue, scoundrel; don't you see that we belong to the corps of Ouwarow, and that we are going on a secret expedition?" At these words the soldier was silent, and suffered us to pass under the protection of the night, without giving the alarm.

The whole army thus escaped the vigilance of the enemy, with the exception of the fifteenth division, which, forming the rear-guard, was placed under the command of General Triaire, with orders to march as soon as the Prince had effected his manœuvre. While this division rested on its arms, it beheld, with grief, the destruction which spread among the stragglers who were left behind us. They likewise waited for night, to continue their march; but, when harassed by fatigue, they found themselves

warm and comfortable, round a blazing fire, many of them would not proceed, but wished to await the return of day. Thus they perished, the victims of their own apathy. The fifteenth division soon filed off in the utmost silence, regarding those whom they left behind as the destined prey of the cossacks.

It was necessary to pass the enemy during a night, which, instead of protecting us by its obscurity, suddenly presented a beautiful, clear moon. The snow, covering the surface of the ground, rendered our march more conspicuous, and it was not without terror that we saw ourselves flanked by clouds of cossacks, who continually approached close to us, as if to reconnoitre, and then returned to the squadrons from which they had been detached. We often thought that they were about to charge us, but General Triaire, halting his column, presented a front so imposing, that they did not dare to attack us. At length, in spite of the ravines, and the mountains of snow that obstructed our passage, we reached the great road, and half an hour afterwards we effected a junction with the young guard, which encamped before a river half a league from Krasnoë. There we found the Emperor, and there consequently our fears were dissipated.

Recounting to the soldiers of the guard, the combat which we had sustained, they informed us, that they likewise had been obliged to force their way through the enemy. Napoleon was exposed to the most imminent danger, in this engagement, and was indebted for his safety to the bravery of his troops. We were told that the band of the guard, rejoining him, after having been separated from him, in the heat of the battle, immediately struck up the air, "Where "can we be happier, than in the bosom of our "family." But, as this might have a double meaning in the midst of frozen deserts, he understood it in the worst sense, and said to the musicians, in an enraged tone of voice, "You had "much better play, 'Let us awake, and save the "empire.'"

The staff of the Emperor, his guard, his cavalry, and the fourth corps, forming a junction in this little town, so filled every part, that it was scarcely possible to move. The streets were thronged with soldiers lying round their fires, which they could maintain only by demolishing the houses that were built with wood, and burning the doors, and the window-frames of the others.

The Viceroy was well received at the quarters of the Emperor, in spite of the ill-humour which he felt in consequence of the disgraces to

which he had been unaccustomed. He highly approved of the stratagem that had been employed to deceive the enemy. The Prince remaining all night in conference, his suite encamped in the streets, until Napoleon and the Viceroy, placing themselves at the head of the guard, marched on the position which the Russians occupied, to succour the first and third corps, who found themselves in the same embarrassment which they felt on the preceding day.

A new engagement commenced. The action was obstinate and bloody, and it was only by the greatest sacrifices, that we were enabled to deliver the few soldiers who were on their march to join us. The third corps was entirely dispersed, and there remained with the Duke of Elchingen, only two or three thousand men, who had escaped from the enemy by passing the Nieper. Twenty-five pieces of cannon, and many thousands of prisoners, were the fruits which the Russians reaped from four successive battles, in which we had nothing to oppose against a complete army, but some miserable soldiers, harassed by continual marches, and who, during more than a month, had been without food, without ammunition, and without artillery.

To reward the bravery of the Russian imperial guard, who had distinguished themselves in these different engagements, Prince Kutusoff permitted them to carry from the field of battle into their camp, all the trophies of victory; among which was the baton of the Marshal Prince of Eckmuhl.\* But that baton, used by our marshals on days of ceremony alone, added no glory to the enemy, for they found it, doubtless, in a baggage-waggon that had been abandoned.

The Russians have divided our retreat into three principal epochs, which, besides the constant increase of our misfortunes, have each a peculiar character. The first ended at the battle of Krasnoë; the second at the passage of the Beresina, and the third at Niemen.

At the conclusion of the first period, to which we are now arrived, they had already taken forty thousand men, twenty-seven generals, five hundred pieces of cannon, thirty-one standards, and, beside our own immense baggage, all the plunder of Moscow, that we had not destroyed. If, to all these disasters, we yet add, forty thousand men, dead of fatigue, or famine, or killed in the different battles, we shall find that our army

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\* See the official report of our retreat, published by the Russians at Wilna, December 22nd, 1812.

was reduced to thirty thousand, including the imperial guard, of whom not more than eight thousand combatants survived. The twenty-five pieces of artillery, which the guards had preserved, could not be reckoned, since it was uncertain whether they would not be obliged to abandon them on the morrow. Our cavalry was almost extinct. This is the exact statement of the losses which we had sustained, at the end of one month's march. From this we formed mournful presages of what we were yet to endure, since we were scarcely half-way to Niemen, and had three rivers to cross, and two mountains to climb,

## BOOK IX.

### THE BERESINA.

THE dreadful disasters which we had endured in our retreat from Moscow to Krasnoë, inclined us to hope that our misfortunes were coming to a close, and that happier events were about to succeed. In fact, the noble position of Orcha being guarded by General Jomini, we were assured that we should pass the Nieper without opposition, and effect a junction with the corps of General Dombrowski, and the Dukes of Reggio and Belluno ; moreover we were approaching the line of our magazines, and we should soon enter on an inhabited and friendly country. In fine, Prince Kutusoff, wishing to concert his plan of attack with the army of Moldavia, which was ready to join him, ceased to harass us, and reserved for the Beresina, the great results which the battle of Krasnoë had promised him.

All these advantages, on which it was said we might build the surest hopes, imposed on the soldiers only for a short time. Those who were best acquainted with the state of affairs, soon dissipated our illusions. The report was rapidly circulated, that Admiral Tschikakoff, coming from the Danube, had repulsed, near Varsovia, the troops that opposed his passage ; that the Austrians had suffered him to take Minsk, and that by seizing the bridge of Borisov, on the Beresina, the admiral intended to form a junction with Generals Wittgenstein and Stengel. These generals, in fact, being, since the battle of Polotsk, no longer held in check by the twelfth and sixteenth corps, had gone, the one on Vileika, to attack the Bavarians, and the other towards Tschachniki, to place itself in communication with the army of Moldavia. On this junction depended the fate of the French army, and it was to prevent the most dreadful, and the most memorable of all defeats, that Napoleon advanced by forced marches on the Beresina.

(November 17th.) As soon as the Prince of Eckmuhl had joined us, and the Duke of Elchingen had thrown himself on the other side of the Nieper, we left Krasnoë, about eleven o'clock in the morning, and marched towards Liadouï. During the short repose which we had taken at

Krasnoë, the cossacks who had passed by that city, were ranged in columns, and followed us along the road. They did not venture to attack the armed soldiers; but, perceiving that the remains of our baggage was stopped, and in great disorder, from the difficulty which the horses found in clearing the valley, which separated the town from a little hill, they rushed upon them, and plundered them without resistance. We there lost the baggage-waggon of the staff, which contained the registers of correspondence, and all the plans, charts, and memoirs, relative to the campaign. Night began to overtake us as we entered Liadouï. Above a little river, which we were to cross previous to our arrival at Liadouï, was a lofty hill, the side of which was so slippery that we were obliged to roll down the descent. The town offered a new aspect to us, for there we first saw inhabitants. Although they were Jews, we forgot the filthiness of that venal people, and by force or entreaties, or rather by force of money, we made them find considerable resources, in a town that at first appeared to be ruined. But that cupidity, which excited our contempt for the Jews, was advantageous to us, because it made them brave every danger to procure us what we demanded.

Liadouï forming part of Lithuania, we thought that it would have been respected, because it belonged to ancient Poland. We departed before daybreak the following morning (November 19), when, to our great astonishment, we were, as usual, lighted by the fire of the houses. That conflagration produced one of the most horrible scenes of our whole retreat, and my pen would refuse to recount it, if the recital of our misfortunes had not for its object, and its moral, to render odious that fatal ambition, which forced the most civilized people to become barbarians in war.

Amongst the buildings, which were burning, were three vast barns, filled with soldiers, most of whom were wounded. They could not get out of the two last, without passing through the first, which was enveloped in flames. The most active saved themselves by leaping out of the windows; but the sick and the maimed, unable to move themselves, saw, with horrible consternation, the flames rapidly advancing to devour them. Moved by the cries, with which these unhappy beings rent the air, some, whose hearts were less hardened than others, attempted to save them. Vain effort! Before we could reach them, they were more than half buried under the burning rafters. Eagerly did they cry to

their comrades through the whirlwinds of fire, to shorten their sufferings by immediately depriving them of life. It became the painful duty of humanity to comply with their entreaties. "Fire upon us, fire upon us, at the head, at the head; do not hesitate," were the cries which proceeded from every part of the building, nor did they cease, till every wretched victim was consumed.

We quickly entered into Doubrowna. That town was in a better state of preservation than any through which we had passed in our journey from Moscow. It had a Polonese sub-prefect, and a commandant of the town. The inhabitants were principally Jews, who procured us a little flour, brandy, and metheglin. They also exchanged the paper-money of the soldiers for cash. In fine, astonished at the confidence of these Israelites, and the honesty of our soldiers, who paid for every thing which they took, we thought plenty was about to revisit us, and that our misfortunes were near their close. Yet we were struggling under accumulated evils. "Bread! bread!" was the incessant cry of the feeble remains of our once-powerful army. The mechanics of every kind suffered greatly: also, the commissaries and storekeepers, who had

been little accustomed to privations. But none were more to be pitied than the physicians, and especially the surgeons, who, without hope of advancement, with even the certainty of death, exposed themselves, like the common soldiers, by dressing them on the field of battle. While we were at Doubrowna, I saw a young surgeon near a house, which the soldiers surrounded in crowds, because it was said, that provisions were to be procured there. He was plunged in the profoundest grief, and, with a wild and anxious countenance, was eagerly endeavouring to force his way into the place. But when he was again and again driven back by the crowd, he exhibited the wildest despair. I ventured to inquire the cause. "Ah, captain! said he, "I am a lost man. For two days I have had no food, and ascertaining that they sold bread in this house, I gave the sentinel six francs to suffer me to enter; but, while the bread was yet in the oven, the Jew would not promise to supply me, unless I gave him a louis in advance. I consented, but when I came back the sentinel was changed, and I was cruelly repulsed from the door. Ah, Sir!" continued he, "I am, indeed, unfortunate; I have lost all the money

" that I had in the world, and am unable to pro-  
" cure a morsel of bread, though I have not  
" tasted any for more than a month."

At that moment, Napoleon passed by in a close chariot filled with furs. He wore likewise, a pelisse and bonnet, of sable-skin, which prevented him from feeling the severity of the weather. On the day when we arrived at Dourbowna, he had marched a great part of the way on foot; and, during that march, he could easily convince himself to what a miserable state his army was reduced, and how much he had been deceived by the false reports which some generals had made, who, knowing how dangerous it was to confess the truth, did not dare to acquaint him with the real state of things, lest they should incur his displeasure. As he had often experienced the wonderful effects of his discourse on the soldiers, he once more mingled among them, and addressing himself angrily to the officers, and familiarly and jestingly to the soldiers, he endeavoured to inspire the one with fear, and the others with courage. But the time of enthusiasm was passed, when one word from him would have produced miracles. His tyranny had oppressed and debased us, and, stifling within us every generous feeling, had deprived him of the only means of reanimating our drooping

spirits. That which mostly affected Napoleon was to see his old guard equally dispirited and despairing. Wounded to the very soul, he assembled one party of them before he quitted Doubrowna, and, placing himself in the centre of them, recommended the officers to maintain strict discipline, and reminded them, that they had always been the pride of his army, and that by their bravery, he had often obtained the most splendid victories. But sentiments like these were out of season, and the man, who, destitute of virtue, aspired to the character of a hero, now too plainly found, that the greatest projects were without glory, particularly where they had not some laudable object, and if their execution appeared beyond the scope of human ability.

(November 19th.) Half an hour after we quitted Doubrowna, we passed a very wide and deep ravine, through which flowed a considerable river. The opposite side quite commanded that at which we had arrived. On seeing this important position, we thanked heaven, that the Russians had not seized upon it to oppose our passage, and this gave us reason to hope, that the village of Orcha was not occupied by them. In fact, some troops lately arrived from France, maintained themselves there, and we effected a junction with them, at two o'clock in the after-

noon, without being harassed by the cossacks. This was a new instance of good fortune, for in the disorder in which we then were, it would have been impossible for us to have forced these two strong positions.

These troops had constructed two bridges over the Nieper, and as every one rushed on in order to pass first, the crowd was immense, yet fortunately no accident occurred. Napoleon arrived at Orcha soon after us, and in an instant every house in the town was occupied. The Jews, as usual, immediately procured us trifling refreshments, but the number of purchasers was so great, that all was soon consumed.

The more I examined the position of Orcha, the greater was my astonishment that the Russians had not taken possession of it. The town is built on the right bank of the Nieper, which rises considerably higher than the left. Many projections appear from the bank, in the form of natural bastions, and perfectly command the passage. The river flows immediately beneath, and is about one thousand two hundred feet wide, and of immense depth. The most formidable army could not pass it without being exposed to entire ruin. While we halted upon these heights, we heard many discharges of musketry, and shortly afterwards, we saw those

who had been left on the other side retiring with the greatest precipitation, and crying as they approached us, "The cossacks, the cossacks." In fact, they actually appeared a short time afterwards, but in numbers so small, that we should have been indignant, if those who fled before them had not been wretched stragglers, without arms, and mostly wounded.

(November 20th.) On the following day we were undisturbed, except that we occasionally heard some discharges of musketry, directed against the cossacks, but accustomed to see them advance upon us, and immediately betake themselves to flight, when faced by the regular troops, their presence gave us no uneasiness. Thus, in the most perfect calm, we tasted the sweets of one day's repose, and some provisions which General Jomini, governor of Orcha, had preserved for the passage of the army. They proved the more acceptable to us, as we had received no distribution of bread since our retreat from Smolensko, the magazines of Krasnoë having been pillaged by the cossacks before we arrived.\*

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\* I ought to observe, that only the soldiers who were present at the roll-call, received any distribution, and they did not form a fifth part of the army. Besides this, there were only three distributions in the space of two months, namely, at Smolensko, at Orcha, and at Kowno.

If the day was tranquil, the night was much disturbed. The Duke of Elchingen, who, since the disastrous day of Krasnoë, had been obliged to abandon the road that we pursued, to effect a safe retreat on the other side of the Nieper, had been engaged with the enemy during three whole days. In that march, he had recourse to every thing that the most extraordinary courage and talents could effect, which raised his reputation to the utmost. His valour was seconded by the generous movement of the Prince Viceroy, who proceeded by forced marches to succour him, and whose assistance effected his deliverance.

(November 21st.) We marched from Orcha at the moment that they began to set it on fire. As we climbed the mountain to recover the grand road, we heard considerable firing of musketry. It proceeded from the soldiers of the first corps, who had been left in the town to form the rear-guard, and who were already engaged with the cossacks. During our stay at Orcha, Napoleon, foreseeing that he should soon be placed in a most critical situation, made every effort to rally his troops. He caused it to be proclaimed by sound of trumpet and by three colonels, that every soldier who did not immediately rejoin his regiment should be punished with death; and that every officer or general who abandoned his

post, should be dismissed. But when we regained the great road, we perceived what little effect this measure had produced. All was in the most frightful confusion, and the soldiers, naked and without arms, continued to march in the same disorder, in contempt of a proclamation so severe.

We encamped at a sorry village on our right, where two or three habitations remained, at the distance of an hour's march from Kokanovo. The village of Kokanovo, which we passed on the following day, was entirely ruined ; the post-house, which had been inhabited by the staff, was all that remained. We continued our march along a road which was horribly dirty, when we received orders not to push forward to Tolotschin, where Napoleon had fixed his quarters, but to halt at a grand *chateau* half a league distant. The road of Orcha, as far as Tolotschin, is undoubtedly one of the best in Europe. It forms a perfectly straight line, and is bordered on each side by a double row of birch-trees; the branches of which, laden with snow and with ice, hung down to the ground like the weeping willow. But these majestic avenues excited in us no admiration ; they witnessed only our tears and our despair. On every side we heard groans and lamentations. Some, feeling that they could

proceed no further, laid themselves on the ground, and, with tears in their eyes, gave us their papers and their money to be conveyed to their families. "Ah! if more fortunate than "ourselves," they exclaimed, "you are permitted to revisit our native country, give our parents this last pledge of our love. Tell them that the hope of seeing them again alone sustained us till this day; and that at length, compelled to renounce this pleasing expectation, we died praying for them, and blessing them. Adieu, God bless you! When on your return to our beloved France, you rejoice in your good fortune, think, sometimes, of our distress." A little further we met others, who, holding in their arms their famished children or their wives, implored one morsel of bread to preserve their lives.

In the meantime, Napoleon was informed that the army of Wolhynia, joined to that of Moldavia, had marched on Minsk (Nov. 16th), and that it had seized on the bridge of Borisov, to cut us off from the passage of the Beresina. He also knew, that the army of Wittgenstein, reinforced by the division of Stengel, sharply pressed the twelfth and sixteenth corps, that it might be enabled to march on the Borisov, and form a junction with Admiral Tschikakoff and

Prince Kutusoff. To oppose the execution of a plan which would complete our ruin, Napoleon sent General Dombrowski against the army of Wolhynia, hoping also that he might anticipate it, in seizing the head of the bridge of Borisov. The general did establish himself there, but he was forced to evacuate his position (Nov. 23d.) The enemy having then passed the Beresina, marched upon Bobr, and came to meet us. The twelfth corps, commanded by the Duke of Reggio, which was at Tschéréïa, received orders to march immediately to the succour of General Dombrowski, and to secure for the army the passage of the Beresina. On the following day (November 24th) he met the division of the Russian General Lambert, four leagues on this side of Borisov. He attacked and beat it. At the same time, General Berkheim, charged with the fourth regiment of chasseurs, forced the enemy to retreat to the other bank of the river, after having lost two thousand men, six cannon, and a quantity of baggage.

The Russians having destroyed in their flight the great bridge of Borisov, defended all the right bank of the Beresina, and occupied, with four divisions, the principal points where we could attempt to pass it. During the 25th, Napoleon manoeuvred to deceive the vigilance of the

enemy, and, by stratagem, obtained possession of the village of Studzianca, placed on an eminence that commanded the river which we wished to pass. There, in the presence, and in spite of the opposition of the Russians, he constructed two bridges, of which the Duke of Reggio profited, to cross the Beresina, and attacking the troops which opposed his passage ; he put them to flight, and pursued them, without intermission, to the head of the bridge of Borisov. General Legrand, an officer of distinguished merit, was wounded in the engagement.

The Duke of Belluno, who for some days had kept the corps of Wittgenstein in check, having received orders to follow the movements of the Duke of Reggio, was pursued in his retreat by the Russian army of the Dwina, which had then formed a junction with Prince Kutusoff, near Lochnitza. During all these operations which took place between the 23d and 27th of November, we passed four cruel days, traversing many villages, among which we could only learn the names of Bobr and Kraupki, where fatigue compelled us to halt. The days were so short, that although we made but little way, we were obliged to march during part of the night. It was from this cause that so many unhappy wretches wandered from their regiments, and

were lost. Arriving very late at the encampments, where all the corps were confounded together, they could not distinguish or learn the situation of the regiment to which they belonged. After having marched the whole day, they were often compelled to wander about all the night to find their officers, and rarely were they sufficiently fortunate to accomplish their object, and then they laid themselves down to sleep, not knowing the hour of march, and on awaking, found themselves in the power of the enemy. As we passed the Borisov, we saw the division of Parthonneaux forming the rear-guard of the ninth corps. We then quitted the great road that led to the bridge occupied by the Russians, and turned to the right to proceed to Studzianca, where we found Napoleon. The other troops of the ninth corps, commanded by the Duke of Belluno, arrived likewise by the same way.

The twelfth and ninth corps, and the Poles, commanded by General Dombrowski, not having been at Moscow, had so much baggage, that from Borisov to Studziánca the road was covered with carriages and waggons. The reinforcements which these troops brought us were very acceptable, yet we almost feared to think, whether the junction of so many men, in the centre of a vast desert, might not increase our misfortunes.

Always marching in the midst of a confused mass of stragglers, with the divisions of the ninth corps, we were two hours afterwards arrested in our progress by a great crowd, and, unable to penetrate, we were compelled to march round it. In the midst of this multitude, were some paltry barns, on the summit of a little hill. Seeing some chasseurs of the imperial guard encamped around it, we judged that Napoleon was there, and that we were approaching the borders of the Beresina. In fact, it was the very spot where Charles XII. crossed that river, on his march to Moscow.\*

What a frightful picture did this multitude of men present, overwhelmed with misfortunes of every kind, and hemmed in by a morass ; that very multitude which, two months before, had exultingly spread itself over half the surface of a vast empire ! Our soldiers, pale, emaciated, dying with hunger and cold, having nothing to defend them from the inclemency of the season, but tattered pelisses, sheep-skins half burnt, and uttering the most mournful lamentations, crowded the whole length of this unfortunate bank. Germans, Poles, Italians, Spaniards,

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\* June 25th, 1708.

Croats, Portuguese, and French, were all mingled together, disputing among themselves, and quarrelling with each other, in their different languages:—finally, the officers, and even the generals, wrapped in pelisses, covered with dirt and filth, confounded with the soldiers, abusing those who insulted them, or braved their authority, formed a scene of strange confusion, of which no painter could trace the faintest resemblance.

Those, whom fatigue, or ignorance of the impending danger, rendered less eager to cross the river, were endeavouring to kindle a fire, and repose their wearied limbs. We had, too frequently, occasion to observe, in these encampments, to what a degree of brutality, excess of misery would debase human nature. In one place we saw several of the soldiers fighting for a morsel of bread. If a stranger, pierced with the cold, endeavoured to approach a fire, those to whom it belonged inhumanly drove him away; or, if tormented with raging thirst, one asked for a single drop of water from another who carried a full supply, the refusal was accompanied by the vilest abuse. Often we heard those who had once been friends, and whose education had been liberal, bitterly disputing with each other for a little straw, or a piece of

horse-flesh, which they were attempting to divide. This campaign was, therefore, the more terrible, as it brutalized the character, and stained us with vices to which we had before been strangers. Even those who once were honest, humane, and generous, became selfish, avaricious, dishonest, and cruel.

Napoleon having, with the assistance of his guard, forced his way through this immense crowd, crossed the river (November 27), about three o'clock in the afternoon. The Viceroy, who had passed the day with him, announced to his staff, that what remained of the fourth corps should pass the bridge at eight o'clock at night. Although not a moment should have been lost in extricating themselves from a place so dangerous, many could not prevail on themselves to leave the fires, round which they were sitting. "It is much better," said they, "to pass the night on this side of the river than on the other, where there is nothing but marshes; besides, the passage is as much encumbered as ever, and by waiting till to-morrow, the crowd will have passed, and the passage will be easy." This unfortunate advice prevailed on too many, and at the hour appointed, only the household of the Prince, and a few of the officers of the staff crossed the river.

It was necessary to know all the danger that would have attended our stay on the left side of the river, to induce us to pass to the other. The Viceroy and his suite, arriving on the right side, encamped on a marshy piece of ground, and endeavoured to find out the places which were most frozen, to pass the night on them and escape the bogs. The darkness was horrible, and the wind tremendous, blowing a thick shower of ice and snow full in our faces. Many of the officers, pierced with the cold, did not cease running, and walking, and striking their feet, during the whole night, to escape being completely frozen. To complete our misfortunes, the wood was so scarce, that we could, with difficulty, supply one little fire for the Viceroy ; and, to obtain some firebrands, we were obliged to appeal to the Bavarian soldiers, the daughter of their king having been united in marriage to Prince Eugene.

(November 28.) Napoleon being gone towards Zembin, left behind him this immense crowd, which, standing on the other side of the Beresina, presented a lively, but frightful picture of the unhappy ghosts that, according to the fable, wander on the banks of the Styx, and rush tumultuously towards the fatal barge. The snow fell with violence ; the hills and forests presented

merely white indistinct masses, scarcely visible through the fog. We could only see distinctly the fatal river, which, half frozen, forced its way through the ice, which impeded its progress.

Although there were two bridges, one for the carriages, and the other for the foot-soldiers, yet the crowd was so great, and the approaches so dangerous, that near the Beresina, the passage was completely choked up, and it was absolutely impossible to move; but about eight o'clock in the morning, the bridge for the carriages and the cavalry, having broken down, the baggage and artillery advanced towards the other bridge, and attempted to force a passage. Then began a frightful contention between the foot-soldiers and the horsemen. Many perished by the hands of their comrades, but a greater number were suffocated at the head of the bridge, and the dead bodies of men and horses, so choked every avenue, that it was necessary to climb over mountains of dead bodies to arrive at the river. Some, buried in these horrible heaps, still breathed, and, struggling with the agonies of death, caught hold of those who mounted over them; but they kicked them with violence, to disengage themselves, and, without remorse, trod them under foot. During this contention, the multitude, which followed like a furious

wave, swept away, and increased the number of victims.

The division of Parthonneaux, which formed the rear-guard, having received orders to return, left a brigade to burn the bridge. That brigade, setting out two hours afterwards to rejoin the first, found it no more. Doubtless it had hastened its retreat, for it has now been fully proved, that General Parthonneaux, who had been unjustly accused of abandoning his troops, received three or four orders in the course of the day, which retarded his march, and placed him in a very critical situation. Be this as it may, the second brigade lost its way, and wandered more than three leagues in a wrong direction. In the middle of a dismal night, and pierced with cold, it mistook the fires of the enemy for ours, and ran to join us ; when, seeing itself surrounded, and without the least hope of escape, it was forced to surrender.

Borisov being evacuated, the three Russian armies effected their junction, and the same day (November 28th), the Duke of Reggio was attacked on the right bank, and half an hour afterwards the Duke of Belluno was engaged on the left. Every soldier, who had before been wandering in confusion and unarmed, fell into the ranks. The battle was obstinately fought, and the Duke of Reggio could

only obtain the victory at the price of his own blood. He was wounded at the beginning of the action, and compelled to quit the field. The command then devolved on the Duke of Elchingen. In the meantime, the enemy, in spite of the valour of our soldiers, and the exertions of their commanders, briskly pressed the ninth corps which formed the rear-guard. We heard already the roar of the cannon, and the sound dismayed every heart. Insensibly it approached, and we soon saw the fire of the enemy's artillery on the summit of the neighbouring hills ; we then doubted not that the engagement would soon extend to that spot which was covered with thousands of unarmed men, sick and wounded, and with all our women and children.

The Duke of Elchingen, having rallied his troops, the battle recommenced with new fury. The division of cuirassiers, commanded by General Doumerc, made a very brilliant charge, at the same time that the legion of the Vistula was engaged in the woods, endeavouring to force the enemy's centre. These brave cuirassiers, although enfeebled by fatigue, and privations of every kind, performed prodigies of valour. They pierced the enemy's squares, took several pieces of cannon, and three or four thousand prisoners,

which our weakness would not permit us to retain. In our cruel situation we fought not for victory, but for life itself, and the honour of our arms.

In the heat of the engagement, many balls flew over the miserable crowd which was yet pressing across the bridge of the Beresina. Some shells burst in the midst of them. Terror and despair then took possession of every heart. The women and children, who had escaped so many disasters, seemed to have been preserved, only to feel here a death more deplorable. We saw them rushing from the baggage-waggons, and falling in agonies and tears at the feet of the first soldier they met, imploring his assistance to the other side. The sick and the wounded, sitting on the trunks of trees, or supported by their crutches, anxiously looked around them for some friend to help them. But their cries were lost in the air. No one had leisure to attend to his dearest friend, his own preservation absorbed every thought.

Monsieur de Labarriere, the muster-master of the fourth corps, was a man of respectable character, and engaging manners. His advanced age, and more especially his feeble constitution, had long rendered him unable to march, and he was now flying with many others on an open

sledge. He accidentally perceived an officer of his acquaintance, and although he was scarcely able to stand, he flew to him, caught him in his arms, and threw himself on his humanity. That officer was severely wounded, but too generous to refuse his feeble help, he promised that he would not leave him. These two, closely embracing each other, slowly proceeded towards the bridge, animated by the consoling thought, that, at least they would be permitted to die together. They entered the crowd, feeble and helpless, they were unable to sustain the intolerable pressure, and were seen no more.

There was likewise a woman marching with the equipage of Napoleon, whom her husband had left a little way behind, while he went forward to endeavour to find a place where they might safely pass. During that time a shell burst near the unfortunate woman. The crowd that was around her, immediately took to flight. She alone remained. But the enemy soon advancing, caused the soldiers to rush back all at once to the bridge, and in their confused march, they hurried the poor woman with them, who vainly strove to return to the place where her husband had left her. Buffeted by the tumultuous waves, she saw herself driven from the spot, without the possibility of return. We

heard her from afar, loudly calling to her husband, but her piercing voice was unattended to, amidst the noise of arms, and the cries of the soldiers. At length, pale and speechless, she fell lifeless at the feet of the soldiers, who, despairing of their own escape, neither saw nor heard her.

At length the Russians, continually reinforced by fresh troops, advanced in a mass, and drove before them the Polonese corps of General Girard, which till then had held them in check. At the sight of the enemy, those who had not already passed, mingled with the Polanders, and rushed precipitately towards the bridge. The artillery, the baggage-waggons, the cavalry, and the foot-soldiers, all pressed on, endeavouring to pass before the others. The strongest threw into the river those who were weaker, and hindered their passage, or unfeelingly trampled under foot all the sick whom they found in their way. Many hundreds were crushed to death by the wheels of the cannon. Others, hoping to save themselves by swimming, were frozen in the middle of the river, or perished by placing themselves on pieces of ice, which sunk to the bottom. Thousands and thousands of victims, deprived of all hope, threw themselves headlong into the Beresina, and perished in the waves.

The division of Girard made its way, by force of arms, through all the obstacles that retarded its march ; and, climbing over the mountain of dead bodies which obstructed the way, gained the other side ; thither the Russians would soon have followed them, if they had not hastened to burn the bridge.

Then the unhappy beings, on the other side of the Beresina abandoned themselves to absolute despair. Some of them, however, yet attempted to pass the bridge, enveloped as it was, in flames ; but, arrested in the midst of their progress, they were compelled to throw themselves into the river, to escape a death yet more horrible. At length, the Russians being masters of the field of battle, our troop retired ; the uproar ceased, and a mournful silence succeeded.

As we marched towards Zembin, we reascended the right side of the Beresina, whence we could distinctly see all that passed on the other bank. The cold was excessive, and the wind blew in loud and hollow gusts. The obscurity of the night was dissipated only by the numerous fires of the enemy, who occupied the heights. At the foot of these hills, were our unfortunate companions. Their destruction was now inevitable, and, amidst all their former disasters, never were they exposed to, nor can ima-

gination conceive horrors equal to those which encompassed them during that frightful night. The elements let loose, seemed to conspire to afflict universal nature, and to chastise the ambition and the crimes of man. The conquerors and the conquered, were alike overwhelmed with sufferings. Round the encampment of the Russians, we saw enormous masses of burning wood, but on the spot which held our devoted companions, there was neither light nor shelter; lamentable cries and groans, alone marked the place which contained these miserable victims.

. More than twenty thousand sick and wounded fell into the power of the enemy. Two hundred pieces of cannon were abandoned. All the baggage of the two corps which had joined us, was equally the prey of the conquerors; but when we saw the deplorable fate of the wretched beings, who were left on the other side of the Beresina, the consciousness of our own safety, rendered us insensible to the loss of all our riches. They were, for ever, deprived of the hope of revisiting the land that gave them birth; they were doomed to pass the sad remnant of their days, amidst the snows of Siberia, or to water with their tears the black bread, which

would be the only wages of the most humiliating servitude.

(November 29th.) Setting out on the morrow for Zembin, and endeavouring to rejoin what remained of the fourth corps, we again reflected on the fate of the numerous friends who were no longer with us. We eagerly embraced those who had returned, whom we had feared we should never again have beheld, and congratulated each other on surviving a day more terrible than the bloodiest battle. We mutually recounted the dangers that we had run, and the difficulties with which we had struggled to escape with life. "I have lost every thing," said one, "servants, horses, baggage; but I think not of it, I rather esteem myself most fortunate, that I have preserved my life, that I have escaped from the inclemency of the weather, the horrors of famine, and the arms of the enemy." "I have nothing but what I carry about me," said a second, "and of all that I had, I only wish for some shoes to defend my feet, and some bread to eat: these are the truest riches." "I have lost all," said a third, "but I do not regret it, since the sacrifice of my baggage has enabled me to save my wounded brother." Such was the

language which we heard, during several successive days, and those who were silent, deeply mused on the dangers which they had passed, and rendered their secret, but fervent thanks to Providence, for a preservation almost miraculous.

**BOOK X.*****THE NIEMEN.***

THE fatal passage of the Beresina, having reduced our corps of reserve to the same condition as those which had been as far as Moscow, realized the fatal predictions, which, for a long time, had been announced to us; and, with the exception of our chief (whose life God seems to have continued, only to deliver him to remorse and despair), all was accomplished.

But what a punishment to this conqueror, to lose the provinces, which he occupied with more rapidity than he invaded them, to have cypress, instead of laurel—smoking cities, instead of incense—and, to accompany his triumph, twenty thousand disarmed soldiers, without linen or stockings, and who were obliged to make shoes out of old hats, and to cover their shoulders with pieces of sacking, and skins of horses, just flayed.

Deplorable vestiges of five hundred thousand brave warriors, who, but for the ambition of a single man, would always have been the honour of France, and the terror of their enemies.

(November 29.) We arrived very early at the village of Kamen, and were continuing our route to Plescenkovice, when Colaud, commander of the advanced-guard, fell back, and announced to us that two thousand cossacks had entered the city, crying "Hourra!" and were massacreing every one they found in the streets. He informed us "that the Duke of Reggio, being wounded, had just arrived; " happily, many officers being near to him, " were ready to render him assistance, or die at " his side, which caused the enemy to fear there " was some ambush. They retired to a neigh- " bouring height, and cannonaded the marshal's " house, to make it capitulate." By the fatality which pursued the Duke of Reggio, a cannon-ball which split a beam, broke off a splinter, by which he was slightly wounded. The commander likewise informed us, "that General Pino had been in the same situation. That the Count Danthouard, on entering into Plescenkovice, had only time to escape to his carriage."

This news determined us to remain at Kamen.

The next day (30th November) we set out before daybreak, and passing by Plescenkovice, we were confirmed in the accounts which we had received. We saw the house where the Duke of Reggio had resided, and were surprised that two thousand cossacks had not ventured to carry off by force, a marshal who was only defended by twenty wounded officers. Napoleon stopped in this city, but the Viceroy continuing his route, encamped in a deserted village near Zavichino, which, according to the map, was named Niestanovitsch.

(December 1st.) The following day, about seven in the morning, the Viceroy, accompanied by a few officers, put himself at the head of some grenadiers of the royal guard, who were still faithful to their colours.

After a very long march, for wearied men, we arrived at the town of Hia.

The Jews, forming the majority of the population, had not quitted their houses, and the love of gain induced them to bring out provisions, which they had intended to conceal. We paid them liberally, for in such a situation the poorest nourishment was preferable to gold. Without this assistance, we should have lost the brave and esteemed Colonel Durieu, whose health was extremely altered; less perhaps by deprivations,

than by the ardent zeal with which he fulfilled his important duties.

(December 2d.) The next day, when we marched upon Molodetschino, we found it still more fatiguing and oppressive. We marched for twelve hours without halting, through an immense forest. The cold was excessive, and the only thing which could reanimate us, was the persuasion, that the cossacks could no longer harass our right. Captain Jouard, who had been sent to Vileika, near to General Wrede, assured us that the Bavarians still kept this important position. We were in a pitiable situation when we arrived at Molodetschino. Happily the houses were good, and the proprietors, who still remained in them, procured us the means of subsistence. The next morning the equipages of Napoleon began to depart. They were scarcely out of the village, when a multitude of cossacks presented themselves, and would have taken them, if they had not hastily returned to place themselves under the protection of the troops, who were already armed in the village. The Viceroy was preparing for his departure, when it was announced to him that we were to remain at Molodetschino, but that he must evacuate the *chateau* which he occupied, for the use of Napoleon, when he arrived.

This delay gave us repose, which was even more precious than the opportunity which it afforded us of obtaining food. Nevertheless, many soldiers expired in the streets. The same desolation extended to the houses where the officers lodged. Some were sick from excessive marching, and protested that they could go no further; others having their feet frozen, and wanting horses, though full of courage, found themselves obliged to remain in the hands of the Russians. The generals were exposed to the same calamities, for many, having lost their servants and their carriages, were unable to replace them. In such circumstances, if sickness attacked them they expired for want of assistance. Such was our situation in Molodetschino, when Napoleon wrote in characters of blood, the fatal 29th bulletin, which made France and her allies, a large family of mourners.

(December 4th.) We quitted the village, but did not take the great road which leads through Zachkevitschi, directly to Smorghoni. We kept to the left of this road, in a bye-way, which conducted us by Leboda to Markovo. We encamped in this village with some soldiers of the first corps, while the Emperor and his guard were at Bienitsa, about half a league from us. Going out for Smorghoni, we crossed marshy

meadows, which were rendered almost impassable by the rigour of the season. These regions are so well defended by nature, that, independent of the rigour of winter, the marshes of Lithuania would have been our grave. When we arrived at this city, we did not find the resources which we had been promised. All the houses were deserted, and the Jews, having taken flight, had deprived us of their assistance. The only provisions we found, consisted of some casks of biscuits, which were immediately devoured.

Napoleon, terrified by so many disasters, and still more so by the fear of losing his authority in France, conceived the idea of abandoning these miserable remains of his army, for the purpose of demanding from his senate a new one. This just terror, which always pursues despotism, made him imagine that his allies were eager to dissolve the compact, which had placed them under his iron yoke.

Full of this resolution, he felt assured, when he arrived at Smorghoni, that the road was safe as far as the Niemen, and called together the chiefs of the army ; afterwards he had a private conference with the Viceroy. This being finished, Napoleon went out from his cabinet, followed by the grand-ecuyer, the marshal of the palace, and General Lefebvre Desnouettes. Crossing one of

the halls, he met the King of Naples, and said to him, with an indifferent air, “*A vous Roi de Naples!*” While pronouncing these words, he went out, accompanied by three persons who were going with him. Being seated in his carriage, he placed at his side General Desnouettes. The grand ecuyer, and the marshal of the palace entered a second; which immediately followed on the route to Wilna. No address to the army, no promise to the Lithuanians, could reanimate their dejected spirits; the one was without a chief, the other abandoned by him who had promised them every thing. The King of Naples took the command of the army, but they marched with so much disorder and precipitation, that it was only when they arrived at Wilna, that the soldiers were informed of a departure as discouraging as it was unforeseen. “What,” said they, among themselves, “is it thus that he abandons those of whom he calls himself the father? “Where then is the genius, who, in the height of prosperity, exhorted us to bear our sufferings patiently? He who lavished our blood, is he afraid to die with us? Will he treat us like the army of Egypt, to whom, after having served him faithfully, he became indifferent, when, by a shameful flight, he found himself free from danger?” Such was the conversa-

tion of the soldiers, which was accompanied by the most violent execrations. Never was indignation more just, for never were a class of men so worthy of pity.

The presence of the Emperor had kept the chiefs to their duty, but when they heard of his departure, the greater part of them followed his example; and, unrestrained by shame, abandoned the remains of the regiments which had been intrusted to them. Till then we found, at intervals, some few armed soldiers, who, conducted by their officers, still rallied round the standard which they had sworn never to forsake, but with life. From the moment they were deprived of their chiefs, unheard-of calamities reduced their number, and these brave soldiers, charged with so precious a burden, were reduced to the painful necessity of hiding the eagle in their sacks. Many, feeling that they were dying, and knowing that the honour of a French soldier consisted in preserving his colours, with a weak hand, dug up the ground to save from the Russians those ensigns, under which our arms had been raised to the pinnacle of glory.

The division Loison, which had come before us from Koningsberg, and those of the Neapolitans, from Wilna, having been obliged to encamp in cold of twenty-two degrees, were totally de-

stroyed, and out of six thousand men, of which each was composed, we could only see, through a thick fog, some feeble battalions, who ran on the road like madmen, or fell down without being able to rise again. Those who could support the fatigue of marching, prolonged their griefs ; but if, weary of life, they wished to die, it was only necessary to stand still, and the frost would terminate their career.

The road which we took presented, at every step, brave officers, covered with rags, supported upon sticks, their hair and beards stiffened by the ice ; these same warriors, who, a short time before, were the terror of our enemies, and conquerors of two-thirds of Europe, having lost their fine appearance, crawled along, and could only obtain a look of pity from soldiers whom they had formerly commanded. A situation still more dreadful, because every one who had not strength to walk was abandoned, and an hour afterwards must inevitably expire. The next day every bivouac presented the image of a field of battle. Whenever a soldier, overcome with fatigue, chanced to fall, the next who approached fell upon him, and before he was dead, robbed him of his clothes for his own use. Every moment we heard some of these unhappy men crying out for assistance. " My comrades," cried one, with

a heart-rending voice, “ assist me to rise ; lend  
“ me a hand to pursue my march.” Every one  
passed without regarding him. “ Ah ! I con-  
“ jure you, by every thing which is dear to you,  
“ do not abandon me to the enemy ; for the sake  
“ of humanity, grant the feeble assistance I ask ;  
“ help me to rise.”

But those who passed, far from being moved  
by this touching prayer, regarded him as dead,  
and, by anticipation, began to strip him, when he  
cried out, “ Oh, assistance ! assistance ! You  
“ assassinate me ; why do you ill-treat me ? Why  
“ do you snatch from me the money and bread  
which I possess, and take from me even my  
clothes ?” If some generous officers had not  
arrived in time to deliver them, some of these  
unfortunates would have been assassinated by  
their comrades.

(December 7.) We arrived at Joupranouï in  
the evening, overcome with fatigue, and were  
obliged to stop there. The dilapidated houses  
could not afford us shelter from the excessive  
cold ; lying on each other, suffering with hunger,  
and chilled with cold, we heard nothing but  
groans. We set out early in the morning (8th  
December), and arrived at Ochmiana about  
eleven o’clock. The winter was so severe, that  
the soldiers burnt whole houses to avoid being

frozen. We saw around the fires, the half consumed bodies of those unfortunate men, who, having advanced too near, in order to warm themselves, and being too weak to recede, had become a prey to the flames. Some unfortunates, blackened by the smoke, and besmeared with the blood of the horses they had devoured, wandered, like ghosts, round these burning houses. They looked on the dead bodies of their companions, and, too feeble to support themselves, they fell down, and died in the same manner. In this city we expected to receive some provisions, but we were informed that the cossacks had pillaged the magazines, and that Napoleon had passed through half an hour after they were gone ; we then continued our route, marching among the dead and the dying, and at length arrived at the paltry stone *chateau* of Rovno-Polé, where the Prince and his staff passed a miserable night.

Misfortune having equalised conditions, every thing was confounded ; it was in vain that each asserted his authority, it was denied. The colonel, who had no food, was obliged to beg from a private soldier. Thus, the man who possessed provisions, although he were a servant, was surrounded by a crowd of courtiers, who, to obtain food, threw aside their rank and distinction, and condescended to caress him. In

short, to give an idea of the dreadful disorder, to which hunger and cold had reduced us, you must figure to yourself an army of thirty thousand men, of different ranks, marching together, without order or discipline, ignorant of the road they were going, and only stopping when weariness or caprice impelled them. The chiefs themselves, being accustomed to command, were the most unfortunate ; we shunned them, to avoid rendering them assistance ; for, in our situation, even to give a glass of water, or to raise a fellow-soldier from the ground, were efforts too dangerous for our own safety.

The route was covered with soldiers who had no longer retained the human form, and whom the enemy disdained to make prisoners. Every day these miserable men made us witnesses of the most afflicting scenes. Some had lost their hearing, others their speech, and many, by excessive hunger and cold, were reduced to a state of frantic stupidity, which made them roast dead bodies for nourishment, or consume their own hands and arms.\* There were some so weak, that not being able to carry wood, or roll a stone, to sit upon, took the dead bodies of their comrades, and,

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\* Official Report, published by the Russians at Wilna, 2d December, 1812.

with a sullen countenance, stedfastly looked upon the burning charcoal, which no sooner expired, than these livid ghosts, unable to rise, fell by the side of those on whom they were seated! We saw many quite mad, who jumped, with naked feet, into the middle of our fires; some, with a convulsive laugh, threw themselves into the flames and perished, while uttering dreadful cries, and making terrible contortions.

We were in this situation when we arrived at the village of Roukoni, where there only remained some wretched barns filled with dead bodies. When about three leagues from Wilna, many continued their march, that they might arrive first in that city, where they hoped not only to find food in abundance, but to stop some days and enjoy the repose which they so much desired. The fourth corps, who were not above two hundred men, stopped in this wretched village; at break of day, we hastened to quit Roukoni, where the cold and the smoke prevented us from sleeping. When we set out, the Bavarians, who formed the advanced-guard, quite frightened, cried out that the enemy was pursuing them. The evening before, they spread a report of having obtained some advantages over them; but the disorder in which they arrived, gave the lie to this intelligence. How-

ever, we must say, to their praise, that they had still some pieces of cannon, but the horses were so weak that they could not drag them along. Every day's march presented a repetition of the unfortunate scenes of which I have given a slight sketch. Our hearts were so hardened to these dreadful descriptions, that sensibility was entirely banished ; self-preservation was the only thought which stimulated us, in the state of barbarism to which we were reduced. We thought that the position of Wilna would permit us to take some repose, and this idea rendered those so happy who arrived there, that they regarded with indifference, those who were on the road, struggling against death. But Wilna, the object of our dearest hopes, was going to be to us another Smolensko.

At length we arrived at its much-desired suburbs ! but with grief we saw the whole of this immense place obstructed by a crowd of carriages, horses, and men. This confusion recalled the Beresina to my mind ; and such was our stupidity, that, being accustomed to follow our column, we were afraid of losing ourselves by venturing a few steps from it ; for while the mass were striving to get in at the same gate, there were at the right and left other avenues at which there were no obstructions.

When we arrived in the city, we found it in extreme disorder, the soldiers wandering in every part to ascertain their quarters. Those of the fourth corps going to the municipality, saw written in large characters, that they were to quarter in the convent of St. Raphael on the other side of the Vilia ; before they quartered, they ran famished from house to house to ask for food. The eating-houses, and coffee-houses, not being sufficient for the immense number of customers, they were instantly shut up. But hunger determined us to find provisions, and we were obliged to break open their doors, while others, with money in their hands, pursued the Jews, who in spite of our generosity, could not satisfy us to the extent of our wants.

At Wilna we heard that Buonaparte had passed through incognito, escorted by a feeble detachment of three regiments of Neapolitan cavalry, which had been sent before him to clear his route. These poor inhabitants of the south were half dead when they passed through ; scarcely had they gone out of Wilna, when a part of the rear returned, having their hands, feet, and noses, entirely frozen. The departure of Napoleon in this disguised manner, not only spread consternation among the Lithuanians, who were devoted to us, but discouraged the French troops. The

first groaned, at finding themselves exposed to the resentment of a master, whose yoke they had wished to shake off; the others were alarmed for their own preservation, for in such a critical situation, every one thought that the absence of the chief, consummated our ruin. But those who felt the danger of our fatal position, jealous for the glory of our arms, thought this departure was happy for us. "Napoleon," said they, "when at Paris, will re-organize a fine army, "will ensure quiet to France, and secure the "co-operation of the allies, whose defection "would be so dangerous."

About three o'clock in the afternoon, the rear of our column had scarcely entered into the suburbs, when we heard that the cossacks had taken possession of the heights which command the city. They soon began firing their cannon ; at this report the new troops, who were in Wiina, beat the drum and sounded the trumpet. In an instant the place was in arms. By one of those events by which Providence confounds the proud, and punishes the insolent, the colossal power of Napoleon was completely reduced in an iron climate, and had no other support than the remains of a Neapolitan division, formed from the garrisons of Tarentum and Capua. These troops being quickly dispersed,

terror immediately spread through the city ; and, at the single word of cossacks, all the soldiers took flight. The King of Naples, forgetting his rank, suddenly abandoned his palace, and, followed by his officers on foot, rushed through the crowd, and ran out of the town to encamp on the road to Kowno.

While some soldiers took arms, others, as night advanced, profiting by the evacuation of the magazines, carried off the provisions, but the greater part in pursuit of food, knocked at every door, and their redoubled blows seemed the dreadful presage of a pillage. The inhabitants, trembling in their houses, dreaded the desolation, and heard on every side the noise of cannon, which thundered over their heads. We gave up all hope of repose, and our feeble remains not being able to resist the attacks of the enemy, we intended to profit by the obscurity of the night, to quit so dangerous a position. It was decided, that at eleven o'clock at night, we should evacuate the town. The time arrived ; we set out silently, leaving the streets covered with soldiers, intoxicated, dead, or asleep. The courts, the galleries, the stairs of the various buildings, were filled with them, and not one of them would set out or even rise to obey the orders of the chief who called them. After leaving Wilna, with as

much difficulty as we entered it, the Prince and the staff went to the King of Naples, where all the officers remained till the next morning. In the middle of a dark night (10th December), we marched along the road to Kowno, but the snow which covered the country, caused us to wander every moment, and left us for a long time uncertain of the road: for the Poles, going to New-Troki, had discovered a new route, which would mislead us. Two hours afterwards we arrived at the foot of a mountain, which was inaccessible, because of its steepness, and the icicles with which it was covered. All around were the remains of the equipages of Napoleon, the baggage left at Wilna, the treasures of the army, and the waggons containing the fatal trophies brought from Moscow, so that we no longer doubted our being on the route of Kowno. While we were groaning at the foot of this mountain, unable to climb it, we distinctly heard the firing in which the cossacks and our sharp-shooters were engaged. Every one, discontented with his situation, cried out that it would have been better to pass by New-Troki, to avoid this fatal mountain. All those who were stopped here, being either sick or wounded, considered themselves as given up to the enemy, and were quite disconsolate, more particularly as they had so fortunately escaped

from Krasnoë and from the Beresina. This grief was changed into despair, when we heard that the cossacks, having passed Wilna, had pursued our rear-guard, and were advancing towards us. Necessity compelled us to wait till the next day, to see if there were any means of going round the mountain, which our horses could not climb. In this interval we made a fire, and, with sighs, impatiently waited the return of day.

We looked every where in vain ; the mountain was so slippery, and the horses so fatigued, that we despaired of accomplishing it. We then thought of conveying the money belonging to the imperial treasure, by the military escort. There was then about five millions, the greatest part of which was in ecus, or crowns ; but it occurred to us, that the soldiers would probably attempt to carry off, for their own use, that which was intrusted to them, as circumstances prevented their detection. The standards taken from the enemy, respecting which these venal souls were no longer interested, were cowardly abandoned at the foot of the mountain, as well as the famous cross of St. Iwan, which had added so gloriously to our trophies.

Those who came afterwards augmented the number of plunderers, and it was a remarkable scene to witness men dying with hunger,

although overburdened with riches. The soldiers, covered with rich clothes and furs, ferocious in their appearance, went out to pillage, and offered sixty francs for a louis, and some gave ten crowns for a glass of brandy. Another, in my presence, for some pieces of gold, offered a cask of silver, and it was bought by a superior officer..

One cannot form an idea of the disorder in which our army then was. Far from being reanimated by the presence of some of the battalions arrived from Prussia, they spread consternation amongst them, who, not knowing whom to obey, threw away their arms, and increased the crowd of stragglers. In short, all our soldiers, transformed into merchants, only sought to sell the stolen goods, while those who had taken money, wished to buy for their own profit. Every where we heard lingots and jewels spoken of. Every soldier was laden with silver, but none with a musket. After this, ought we to be astonished at the fears with which the cossacks inspired our miserable troops? In this state of confusion, after five hours' distressing march, we arrived at Evé, about ten leagues from Wilna. We had scarcely entered when the Count Mejean,\* supported by

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\* Counsellor of State for the kingdom of Italy, and Secretary to the Viceroy. He went through the whole campaign with his two sons, and heard at the Beresina, that his youngest son had been killed at the battle of Polotsk.

his son and the valet de chambre of the Prince, arrived. This unfortunate father, whose patriotism I regret I cannot particularly describe, had been obliged to travel on foot, from the mountain of Wilna, across a country covered with snow ; but this man, whose courage had often astonished us, and who, though not a soldier, had patiently endured the sufferings to which we were subjected, felt such great attachment to the Prince, that he quite forgot the misfortunes of the day when he was in the presence of his highness.

Similar miseries happened to others. The Prince of Eckmuhl, weakened by a fever, could only travel in a carriage. Joubert, who, for a long time, had been deprived of servants, was left for dead in this village, and he was in such a miserable state, that he excited the tears of all who saw him. The same lot befell many other officers who remained with the baggage of the Prince ; but, in the evening, we ascertained, thanks to the skill and extraordinary activity of Boutarel, adjutant of the palace, that these stragglers, to avoid the mountain of Wilna, had gone by New-Troki, and that it was only the length of the journey which obliged them to stop at Evé.

(December 11.). Setting out from this village, we heard from those who had escaped from

Wilna, that the Russians had entered it at day-break. A crowd of generals, colonels, officers, and more than twenty thousand soldiers, who were detained by weakness, fell into their hands. They added, that the officers had been very well treated, but that every soldier, or servant, was ordered to go to Moscow immediately, to be employed in rebuilding the city. These unfortunates laying in the streets, or public places, without fire or nourishment, and most of them wounded or sick, offered such an afflicting spectacle, that the enemy endeavoured to soothe their misery. The least to be pitied, were those who, having been robbed by the cossacks, died shortly after our departure. Sad effect of human weakness ! the same men who had travelled from Moscow to Wilna, wanted courage to pursue their course a few leagues more, which would have ensured their existence. We heard also, that the Jews had ill-treated many of our soldiers, particularly those of the imperial guard, thus wishing to take revenge for the bad treatment they had received from us ; but the Russians, with that justice which always characterised them, hung many of these Israelites, as a lesson to the people, that they should not unite their passions with the quarrels of sovereigns.

The rear of our long column, which left at all

parts of the road the dead and the dying, were continually followed by a cloud of cossacks, who stripped our soldiers, and afterwards left them to the care of the peasants, who treated them with a thousand indignities, and made them their slaves. At last the Russians, weary of making prisoners, liberated all the soldiers belonging to the confederation of the Rhine, and contented themselves with detaining officers of distinction. But when they seized a Frenchman, miserable as he was, they stripped him, and treated him with the greatest ridicule. If he went out with them in the evening, he was ordered to fetch water or wood; afterwards they inhumanly drove him from the fire which he had lighted; fatal lot of the soldiers, who, forced to make war, are always victims of the calamities which arise from the quarrels of kings.

A cossack officer, who spoke very good French, overtook one of our victuallers, who, to save himself, implored pardon, saying, that he was not fighting, and then offered his purse to satisfy the cossack, but, not content with this seizure, he began to search him, and found in his pockets, boxes of gold, diamonds, and numerous rings enriched with precious stones, which he had, no doubt, taken at the pillage of Moscow. At this sight, the officer could not restrain his

indignation, and said to the victualler, “ See to  
“ what your cupidity has reduced you ; in the  
“ hope of making your fortune, you have fol-  
“ lowed the armies, to partake of their booty,  
“ without their dangers. In obtaining these  
“ much-desired riches, you have been enfeebled  
“ by their weight, and could not escape my  
“ pursuit. I could in my just indignation,  
“ return you captive to the city you have ra-  
“ vaged ; but you are too miserable to recon-  
“ struct that which you have destroyed. Return  
“ if you can to France ; and, in publishing our  
“ clemency, convince your fellow-citizens of  
“ the miserable state to which they expose you,  
“ every time they trouble the peace of the  
“ world, in supporting the standards of an unjust  
“ aggressor.” At these words he left him to  
“ the cossacks, who, disdaining to make him pri-  
soner, drove him before them, beating him with  
the handles of their lances. Before we arrived  
at Zismori, we heard a cannonading upon our  
rear, very near us, which made us think that the  
few soldiers of the rear-guard were pursued. In  
spite of which, the fatigue was so great that many,  
preferring repose to safety, stopped at Zismori ;  
but the Viceroy went on to the village of Roum-  
chichki.

(December 12.) Exhausted by a very long

and tedious march, dying with fatigue, we arrived at Kowno, where the remains of the corps were reunited. According to custom, they encamped in the streets, and as we knew that our deplorable situation no longer permitted us to preserve any discipline, we gave up to pillage the magazines, which were amply stored; immediately clothes, corn, and rum, were had in abundance; the principal places were filled with broken casks, and the spilt liquor formed a stream in the middle of the public streets. The soldiers, having for a long time been deprived of this beverage, drank to excess, and more than two thousand of them, quite intoxicated, slept upon the snow, and, being seized with cold, they all perished.

In the evening we were told that the fourth corps would take the road to Tilsit; and as many of us, to avoid confusion, had been accustomed to sleep one or two leagues before the head-quarters, a great number set out towards that town. In the middle of the night, the chief of the staff came to look for the fourth corps, which was literally shut up in a single room. He told us that the order had been revoked, and that it was no longer their intention to go to Tilsit, but to Gumbinnen, and it was this order, and counter-order, which completed our ruin; for after that time, the fourth corps

only consisted of those in the house of the Prince, and about eight or ten staff-officers.

(December 13th.) The next day, in going out from Kowno, we found the same tumult which we had experienced at the gate of Wilna; the crowd was pressing on the bridge, although the Niemen was frozen hard enough to have borne the weight of artillery. In Kowno and its environs, we saw a number of unfortunates lying on the snow, who had been overcome on their approach to the end of this fatal expedition. We were particularly affected at seeing Colonel Vidman among the dead. He was one of the small number of the Italian guards of honour, who had, till then, sustained the fatigues of the campaign; but, not being able to proceed further, he fell, while going to the bridge, and expired, without having the satisfaction to die out of Russia.

The calamities of the army had spread to the imperial guard, and many of its soldiers died every day with hunger, cold, or fatigue. Among these victims I saw one truly worthy of admiration. He was an old grenadier, lying on the bridge of Kowno. He was spared by the crowd, who, passing by him, had respected his clothes, his decoration, and, above all, his three chevrons. This brave man, with the utmost firmness,

seemed to await his death, and disdained to have recourse, like so many others, to useless supplications, when, by chance, one of his comrades passed by ; then he made a last effort to get up, but not being able to accomplish it, and feeling himself dying, he summoned all his strength, and said to one of his companions, who was going to assist him, “ Cease, friend, do not lavish “ on me superfluous assistance ; I die with “ regret at being conquered by enemies we “ could not fight. Famine and winter have alone “ reduced me to the state in which you now see “ me. This same body, which has resisted more “ than ten wounds, to-day miserably falls for “ want of a morsel of bread. Ah ! can our “ enemies triumph by favour of the rigour of “ their climate ; at least, will they forbear to “ profane the distinctions that I have gained in “ fighting against them ? Carry to my captain “ this decoration, which was given to me on the “ field of battle at Austerlitz ; likewise, take “ him my sabre ; I used it at Friedland, and it “ would still be as fatal to the Russians, as it “ was at that period, if the approaching spring “ would permit us to go to Petersburg as we “ have been to Moscow.”

On the morning of the 13th of December, out of all that remained of four hundred thousand

warriors, who had crossed the *Niemen*, on the opening of the campaign, scarcely twenty thousand men repassed it; among whom, two-thirds, at least, had not seen the Kremlin. We arrived at the opposite bank, like ghosts returned from the infernal regions; with terror we looked behind us, and with horror beheld the savage countries where we had so severely suffered.

After crossing the bridge, we took the left road to Gumbinnen; many wished to go to the right; still thinking, after the order of the preceding evening, that they must go to Tilsit. We, who followed the right road, had not proceeded many steps, when we were obliged to climb a high mountain, prodigiously steep, and had we still retained our equipages, it must have proved fatal to them. Many carts and carriages were left at Kowno, and a superb park of artillery, lately arrived from Koningsberg, was left at the foot of the mountain.

Scarcely had we got into Poland, when our soldiers dispersed in different roads, and wandered, like deserted travellers, in the sanie country which, six months before, had been covered with our numerous armies. In the evening, the King of Naples and the Prince stopped at Skrauda. The same morning (14th December), when we departed from this village, the cossacks

entered Kowno, passed the Niemen, which was frozen at every point, and spread themselves in the immense plains of Poland, where they killed, or made prisoners, many of our soldiers, who, not thinking that the Russians would pass the Niemen, conceived that they were safe.

From Skrauda many took the direction of Thorn ; but the Viceroy still continued following that of Gumbinnen, and he arrived in this little village after having slept at Pillwizken, Virballen and Darkehmen (14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th December).

From thence he sent General Giffenge, his aid-de-camp, to Koningsberg, to order all those of the 4th corps, who had taken the road of Tilsit, to go to Marienwerder.

Koningsberg being the first great city in the vicinity of the road we had marched, was soon filled with those who, having escaped from Moscow, hoped to repair the misfortunes they had suffered. The coffee-houses, the restaurateurs, the furnished hotels, could not at any price satisfy the extent of our wants ; it was necessary to cut through the crowd to get in. The cold was terrible, but, knowing that we could defend ourselves against it, and moreover the pleasure of finding what we desired, was still more agreeable, as six months of continual hardships,

had deprived us not only of the comforts, but even of the necessaries of life.

The King of Naples came to Koningsberg, where he was coldly received by the principal authorities of the town. The chiefs of each corps encamped along the Vistula, and occupied the towns of Plock, Thorn, Marienburg, Marianwerder, and Elbing, for their head-quarters. During this time, the Viceroy having quitted Gumbinnen, passed by Insterburg and Wehlau 18th, 19th, December), to visit the fields of battle of Friedland, Eylau, and Heilsberg, (20th, 21st, 22d, December); thus furnishing himself even in unhappy circumstances, with important subjects for meditation and usefulness. The 27th of December, his Highness arrived at Marianwerder, where he was occupied in collecting together all who remained of the 4th corps. After many inquiries we succeeded in collecting about eight hundred wounded, the unfortunate remains of forty-eight thousand warriors from Italy, who were the victims, not of the arms of the enemy, but of the fatal imprudence of a chief, who, not satisfied with having subjugated the best half of Europe, wished to struggle against the elements, and to invade the deserts of Russja. Afterwards the Viceroy directed towards France and Italy

those officers and soldiers, whose infirmities would not permit them to undertake another campaign. He recompenced those soldiers who had behaved well, and punished, by the most sensible affronts, those few who had dishonoured themselves by a cowardly and pusillanimous conduct.

Such were the dreadful calamities which dissipated a powerful army, in consequence of having rashly undertaken the proudest and the most useless of all expeditions. In looking into the annals of antiquity, we find that since the time of Cambyses there never was such a powerful union of men, who experienced such dreadful reverses. Thus were accomplished the ostentatious prophecies of Napoleon at the beginning of the war ; with this difference, that it was not Russia, but himself, who, carried away by fatality, was struck by this inevitable blow of Providence, the happy result of which, in putting an end to a despotic influence, has restored to Europe her liberty, to France her happiness.

referred to above would have substantially reduced the number of days during the May–October period with more than 0.15 precipitation and 70% freezing rain. But precipitation below 0.15 mm day<sup>-1</sup> and with less than 70% freezing rain would not qualify, despite relatively consistent frequency of such events in the winter months.

Figure 10 presents the climatology of the daily precipitation extremes for the entire study period. The distribution of the extremes shows that the highest precipitation extremes occur during the winter months, with the maximum daily precipitation reaching approximately 100 mm day<sup>-1</sup>. The frequency distributions of the extremes are presented for three different seasons: fall (September–November), winter (December–February), and spring (March–May). The highest frequency of extremes occurs during the winter season, with the highest frequency occurring during the month of January. The frequency distributions for the fall and spring seasons are very similar, with the highest frequency occurring during the month of October. The frequency distributions for the three seasons are very similar, with the highest frequency occurring during the month of January. The frequency distributions for the three seasons are very similar, with the highest frequency occurring during the month of January.

The frequency distributions of the extremes for the three seasons are very similar, with the highest frequency occurring during the month of January. The frequency distributions for the three seasons are very similar, with the highest frequency occurring during the month of January.

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

## ITINERARY

*Of the March of the Fourth Corps in the Russian Territory,  
during the Campaign of 1812.*

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	Leagues.
1 July, 1812, from Pilony to Kroni .....	2
2 ————— Melangani .....	7
3 ————— Rouicontoui .....	6
4 ————— New-Troki .....	3
5 ————— Halted.	
6 ————— Halted.	
7 ————— Rudniki .....	6
8 ————— Paradomin.....	3
9 ————— Halted.	
10 ————— Paulovo .....	4
	(At the castle of the Count of Choisneil.)
11 ————— Ochmiana .....	6½
12 ————— Smorghoni .....	8
13 ————— Halted.	

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The Emperor Napoleon passed the Niemen at Kowno, the 24th June; the 22d, being at Wilkowiski, he declared war against Russia. The fourth corps, commanded by the Viceroy of Italy, passed the Niemen at Pilony, the advanced-guard effected its passage the 29th; but the Prince and the fifteenth division passed on the 1st of July. On the 28th Napoleon was at Wilna.

	Leagues.	Brought over 45½
14 July. From Smorghoni to Zachkevitschi .....	3½	
15 _____ Vileika .....	8	
16 _____ Kostenevitschi .....	6	
17 _____ Dolghinow.....	4½	
18 _____ Dokzice .....	7	
19 _____ Halted.		
20 _____ Berezino .....	6½	
21 _____ Pouichna, or Gloubokoé	6½	
22 _____ Kamen .....	6	
23 _____ Botscheikovo.....	3½	
24 _____ Bezenkovitschi .....	4	
25 _____ Soritza .....	4½	
	(Three leagues on this side Ostrowno.)	
26 _____ Combat .....	5½	
	(Bivouac at small castle Dobrijka.)	
27 _____ Bivouac before Witepsk	2½	
28 _____ Bivouac at Aghaponov- chtchina .....	5½	
29 _____ Sourai .....	5	
30 _____ Halted,		
1 August _____ Ditto,		
2 _____ Ditto.		
3 _____ Ditto.		
4 _____ Ditto.		
5 _____ Ditto.		
6 _____ Ditto.		
7 _____ Ditto.		
8 _____ Ditto.		
9 _____		

Carried forward 1931

Leagues.

Brought over 123 $\frac{3}{4}$ 

9 August. From Sourai to Janowitschi .....	4
10 —————— Halted.	
11 —————— Velechkovitschi .....	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
12 —————— Liozna .....	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
13 —————— Liouvavitschi .....	5 $\frac{1}{4}$
14 —————— Rasasna .....	4
15 —————— Siniaki .....	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
16 —————— Katova .....	3
17 —————— Bivouac.....	5
(At a league from Korouitnia.)	
18 —————— Bivouac.....	5
(Near the <i>chateau</i> of Novoidvor.)	
19 —————— Suburb of Sinolensk ..	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
20 —————— Passed the Nieper ....	$\frac{1}{2}$
(Bivouac above Smolensk.)	
21 —————— Bivouac same place.	
22 —————— Ditto.	
23 —————— Volodimerowa .....	5
24 —————— Pologhi.....	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
25 —————— Zazele .....	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
26 —————— Mikailovskoe .....	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
27 —————— Agopochina .....	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
(Passed the Niemen at Blaghove.)	
28 —————— Bivouac.....	4
(Round a <i>chateau</i> a league beyond Bereski.)	

Carried over 199 $\frac{1}{4}$

	Leagues.
	Carried over 199 $\frac{1}{4}$
29 Aug. From Agopochina to Novoë .....	9
30 —————— Halted.	
31 —————— Pokron .....	$6\frac{1}{4}$
1 September —————— Paulova .....	$6\frac{1}{2}$
2 —————— Woremiewo .....	2
3 —————— Halted.	
4 —————— Louzos .....	$5\frac{1}{2}$
5 —————— Encamped on the heights of Borodino .....	4
6 —————— Ditto.	
7 —————— Battle.	
8 —————— Ouspenskoe, or Krasnoë .....	$3\frac{1}{2}$
9 —————— Rouza .....	$6\frac{1}{4}$
10 —————— Halted.	
11 —————— Alpalchtchouina .....	$4\frac{1}{2}$
12 —————— Zwenigorod .....	$3\frac{1}{2}$
13 —————— Buzaievo .....	$6\frac{1}{2}$
14 —————— Khorechevo .....	$4\frac{3}{4}$
15 —————— Moscow .....	2
<hr/>	
Total from Pilony to Moscow.....	263 $\frac{1}{2}$
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Stopped in this city from 15th Septemper, until	
18 October —————— Village on the road	
from Kalouga, a	
league from Moscow .....	1
19 —————— Little village, near Ba-	
toutinka bivouac .....	5
20 —————— Inatowo .....	$7\frac{1}{4}$
21 —————— Fominskoe .....	3
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Carried forward 16 $\frac{1}{2}$

	Leagues.
	Brought over 16½
22 October.	Halted.
23 From Frominskoe to a village, half a league beyond Borovsk bivouac .....	7½
24 —————— Battle of Malo-Jarosla- vitz bivouac.....	4½
25 —————— Halted.	
26 —————— Ouvarovskoe bivouac ..	4
27 —————— Alfereva.....	4½
28 —————— Village a league beyond Borisov, supposed to be Mitiaeva .....	2½
29 —————— Ouspenskoe, called Kras- noe bivouac .....	5½
30 —————— Village $\frac{1}{4}$ league on the right of the road be- tween Kolotskoi and Prokofefo bivouac ..	6
31 —————— Ghiat bivouac .....	8½
1 November —————— Near Velitschevo bivouac	5
2 —————— Fœderovskoe bivouac ..	6½
3 —————— Battle of Viazma bi- vouac, $\frac{1}{2}$ league fur- ther .....	3½
4 —————— Rouibki, a league be- yond Semlevo .....	7
5 —————— Jolkov Postoia Door ..	3½
6 —————— Doroghobuei bivouac ..	6
7 —————— Zazele bivouac.....	7
8 —————— Sloboda bivouac .....	4

Carried over 10½

	Leagues.
	Brought over 101½
9 November. From Sloboda passed the Wop, bi-	
vouaced at a little	
village, half a league	
from this river .....	1
10 ----- Doukhovchtchina.....	4½
11 ----- Halted.	
12 ----- Wolodimerowa bivouac	6½
13 ----- Smolensko.....	5½
14 ----- Halted.	
15 ----- Hamlet three leagues	
from Smolensko, sup-	
posed to be Loubna ..	3½
16 ----- Krasnoe.....	7
17 ----- Liadoui .....	1½
18 ----- Doubrowna .....	8
19 ----- Orcha .....	4
20 ----- Halted.	
21 ----- Half league before Kok-	
hanovo bivouac .....	5
22 ----- Bivouac round a castle,	
half a league this side	
Toloschen.....	5
23 ----- Bivouac three leagues	
from Toloschin, near Ja-	
blonka .....	4
24 ----- Bobr .....	4
25 ----- Little village, five leagues	
from Bobr, where there	
is an insulated church,	
bivouac .....	5½

Carried over 166½

Leagues.

Brought over 166 $\frac{1}{2}$ 

26 November. From a village at Nemonitsa, to two and a half leagues on this side Borisov, bivouac	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
27 Studzianoa, passage of the Beresina, bivouac ..	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
28 Zembin, bivouac .....	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
29 Kamen .....	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
30 Niestanovitschi, near Za- vichino .....	6
1 December. Iliia .....	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
2 Molodetschino .....	6
3 Halted.	
4 Village supposed to be Markovo bivouac ....	7
5 Smorghoni .....	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
6 Joupranoui.....	5
7 Rovno-Pole bivouac....	5
8 Roukoni bivouac .....	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
9 Wilna.....	3
10 Eve bivouac .....	10
11 Zismori .....	6
12 Kowno .....	10
Total....	255
From Niemen to Moscow....	261 $\frac{1}{2}$
Total...,	516 $\frac{1}{2}$

## A LIST

*Of all the Persons, mentioned in this Work, with their  
Rank during the Campaign in Russia.*

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### NAPOLEÓN.

King of Westphalia, Commander of the 8th Corps.  
 King of Naples, Commander of all the Cavalry.  
 Viceroy of Italy, Commander of the 4th Corps.  
 Prince of Neufchatel and of Wagram, Major-General.  
 Prince of Eckmuhl, Commander of 1st Corps.

Duke of Reggio,	do.	2d.
Duke of Elchingen	do.	3d.
Prince Poniatowski	do.	5th.
Marshal Count St. Cyr, do.		6th.
General Count Regnier, do.		7th.
Duke of Abrantes,	do.	8th.
Duke of Belluno,	do.	9th.
Duke of Tarentum,	do.	10th.

Prince Schwartzenberg, Commander of the Austrian Auxiliary Corps.

Duke of Istria, commander of the Cavalry of the Guard.

Duke of Vicenza, General of Division, Grand Ecuyer.

Duke of Frioul,	do.	Grand Marshal of the Palace.
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Count Rapp,	do.	} Aides-de Camp to the Emperor.
Count Lauriston,	do.	

- Count Lefebre Desnouettes, General of Division, Colonel of the Horse Chasseurs of the Guard.
- Count Friant, General of Division, Colonel of the Grenadiers of the Foot Guards.
- Count Nansouty,  
Count Grouchy,  
Count Montbrun. } Commanders of Cavalry Corps.
- General Dessolets, Chief of the Viceroy's Staff.
- Count Danthouard, Commander of the Artillery of the Fourth Corps.
- Count Eblé, General of Division of Artillery, Commander of the Bridge Equipages.
- Count Gudin,  
Baron Gerard,  
Count Dessaix,  
Count Compans,  
Count Morand. } Generals of Division—1st Corps.
- Count Verdier,  
Count Legrand,  
Baron Merle. } Generals of Division—2d Corps.
- Baron Ledrut, Commander of a Division—3d Corps.
- Count of Claparede, General of Division, Commander of the Legion of the Vistula.
- Baron Delsons  
Count Broussier,  
Count Pino. } Generals of Division—4th Corps.
- Baron Wrede,  
General De Roy,  
General Sierbein. } Bavarian Generals—6th Corps.
- Count Parthonneaux,  
Baron Girard. } Generals of Division—9th Corps.

- Baron Grandjean**, Commander of a Division—10th Corps.  
**General Gravers,**      }  
**General Kleist,**      } Prussian Generals—10th Corps.  
**Count Charpentier**, General of Division, Governor of Smolensko.  
**Count Baraguey d'Hilliers**, General of Division.  
**Count Loison**, Commander of a Division, from Koningsberg.  
**General Dombrowski**, Commander of a Polish Division.  
**Count Sanson**, General of Division, Chief of the Topographical Bureau.  
**Baron Haxo**, General of Division of Engineers.  
**Count Sebastiani,**  
**Baron Lahoussaye,**  
**Count Bruyeres,**  
**Baron de St. Germain,**  
**Baron Doumerc,**      } Generals of Division of Cavalry.  
**Count Preyssing**, Commander of a Division of Light Bavarian Cavalry.  
**Prince Czartoryski**, Grand Marshal of the Diet of Warsaw.  
**Count Mejean**, Counsellor of State of the Kingdom of Italy, and Secretary of the Viceroy.  
**General Poitevin (Baron Maureillan)**, Commander of the Engineers of the 4th Corps.  
**Baron Aubrey**, Commander of Artillery of 2d Corps.

## GENERALS OF BRIGADE.

- Baron Ricard.**  
**Roussel.**  
**Huard.**  
**Plausaune.**  
**Bonami.**

**Baron Nagle.**

Augereau,

Marion.

Compere.

Villata.

Fontane.

Levie.

Chastel.

Berkheim.

Colbert.

Castex.

Saint Geniez.

Aug. Caulincourt.

Pajol.

Guyon.

Pouget, General of Brigade, Governor of Witepsk.

Lecchi, ditto ditto, Commander of the Italian Guard.

Lepel, Aid-de-Camp to the King of Westphalia.

D'Hery, Aid-de-Camp to the King of Naples.

Klengel, General in the Saxon service.

General Jomini, Governor of Orcha.

Baron Triaire, General of Brigade, Aid-de-Camp to the Viceroy.

Baron Giffenga, ditto ditto

Baron Lacroix, Colonel, ditto

Count Louis Tascher Lapagerie,

— Charles Labadoyere,

— Maurice Mejean,

— Jules Desseve

} Chiefs of Squadrons.

Colonel Delfanti, Officer of the Ordnance of the Viceroy.

André Corner, Lieutenant ditto.

Liedot, Colonel of Engineers.

**Marbœuf**, Colonel of Lancers.

**Kliski**, Polish Colonel, with the Viceroy.

**Radzivil**, Colonel of the 8th Polish Hulans.

**Durieu**, Adjutant-Commander, Sub-Chief of the Staff of the 4th Corps.

**De Bourmont**,

**Asselin**,

**Forestier**,

} Adjutant-Commanders attached  
to this Staff,

**Colonel Grosbon** of the 53d Regiment.

— Battaglia, Commander of the Italian Guards of Honour.

— Vidmann, Commander of the Company of the Venetian Guards of Honour.

— Demay, Commander of the Artillery of the 13th Division.

— Banco, of the 2d Horse Chasseurs.

— Rambourg, of the 3d ditto

D'Oreille, Major of the Spanish Regiment Joseph Napoleon,  
Vives, Major of Artillery.

Colaud, Chief of Battalion, Waggon-Master-General of the 4th Corps.

Sewlinge, ditto, attached to the Staff.

Boutarel, Captain of Horse Chasseurs, Adjutant of the Palais Royal of Monza.

Trezel, Captain, Aid-de-Camp of General Guilleminot.

Maisonneuve,

Jguard,

Evrard,

} Assistant-Captains of the Staff  
of the 4th Corps.

Morlaincourt, Captain of Engineers to the 4th Division,

Bonardelle, Captain of Artillery.

Octave de Segur,

Ferrari,

} Officers of Hussars.

Guyard,  
Savary,  
Bordoni,  
Mastini, } Captains of the 9th of the line.  
} Lieutenants of the Italian Guards  
} of Honour.

Saint Marcellin de Fontanes, attached to the Staff of the  
4th Corps.

Lesseps, French Consul at Moscow.

Villeblanche, Auditor of the Council of State, Intendant  
of Smolensko.

## ALEXANDER I. Emperor of Russia.

### Grand Duke Constantine.

Prince Kutusoff, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army  
Barclay de Tolly, Commander-in-Chief before the arrival  
of Prince Kutusoff.

Prince Wittgenstein, Commander of the 1st Russian Corps.

Generals	Bogawout, .....	ditto .....	2d ditto.
	Schomoaloff, ....	ditto .....	3d ditto,
	Tutschkoff, .....	ditto .....	4th ditto
	Prince Bagration, ditto	.....	5th* ditto
	Doctorow, .....	ditto .....	6th ditto
	Tomasow, .....	ditto .....	7th ditto

**Admiral Tschikakoff, Commander of the Russian Army  
of the Danube.**

### Platoff, Hetman of the Cossacks.

Platoff, son.

Orlow Dennisow, General of the Advanced Guard.

Kamenski.

Eitel.

Essen.

Marcoff

{ Generals Commanders in Vol-hynia.

\* Second Corps, called the Army of the West.

Repnin,	} Generals, Commanders in the Stengel,
Lambert, Commanding a Division of the Army of the Danube.	
Sicverse, General, employed in the 2d Army of the West.	
Ostermann,	} Generals employed in the Centre Bennigsen,
Skalon,	
Ouvaraw,	
Balla,	
Koulniew, General of Light Cavalry.	
Koff, General of Cavalry.	
Illoradowitch, Commander-General of the Advanced- Guard of Prince Kutusoff.	
Archbishop Platon.	
Bishop Augustin, Vicar of Moscow.	
Rostopchin,	} Nobles of Moscow. Momonoff,
Orlow,	
Saltikoff,	
Sherimitow,	

FINIS.

## DIRECTIONS TO THE BINDER.

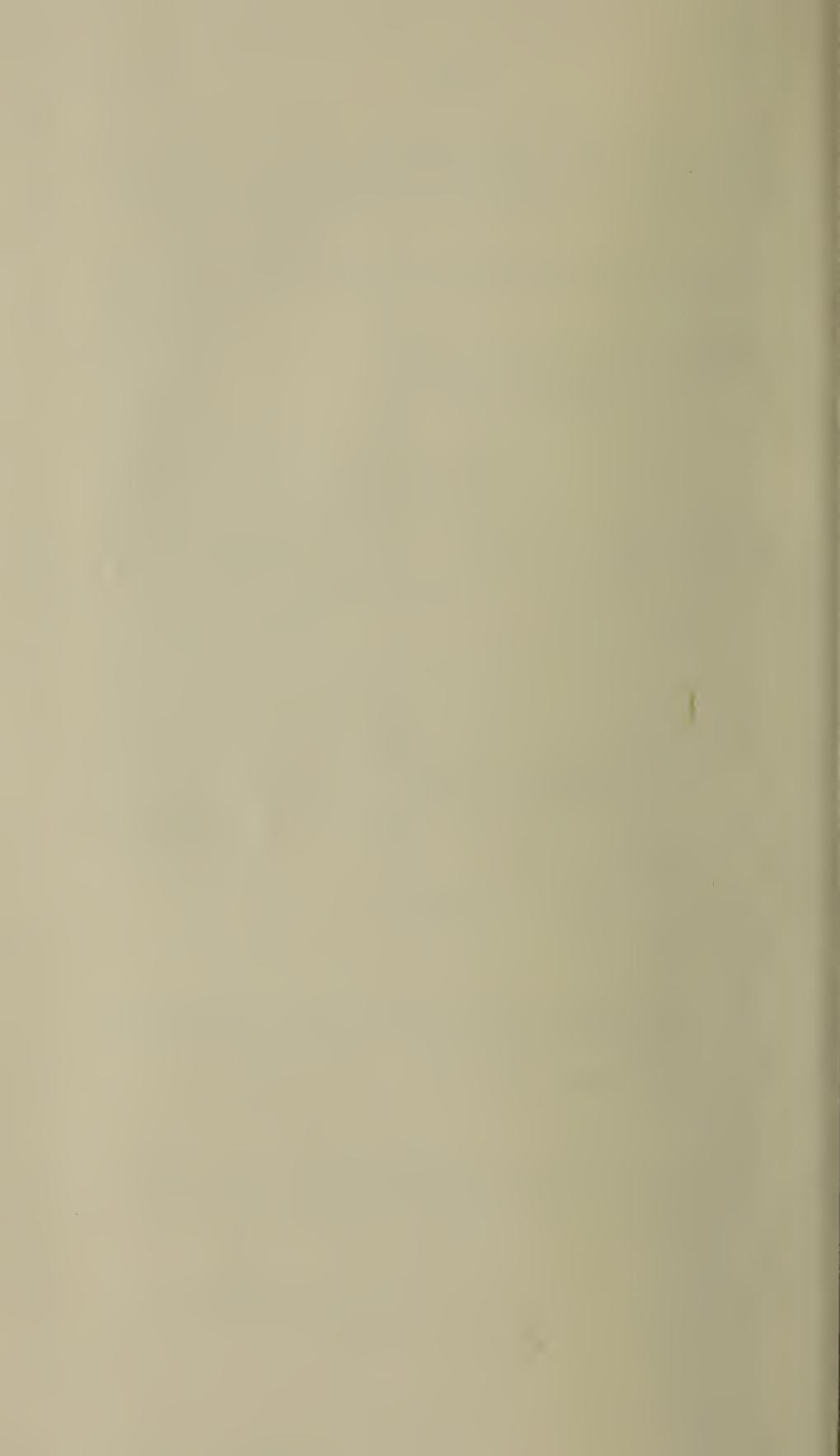
## Plan of the Battle of Moscow, to face the title.

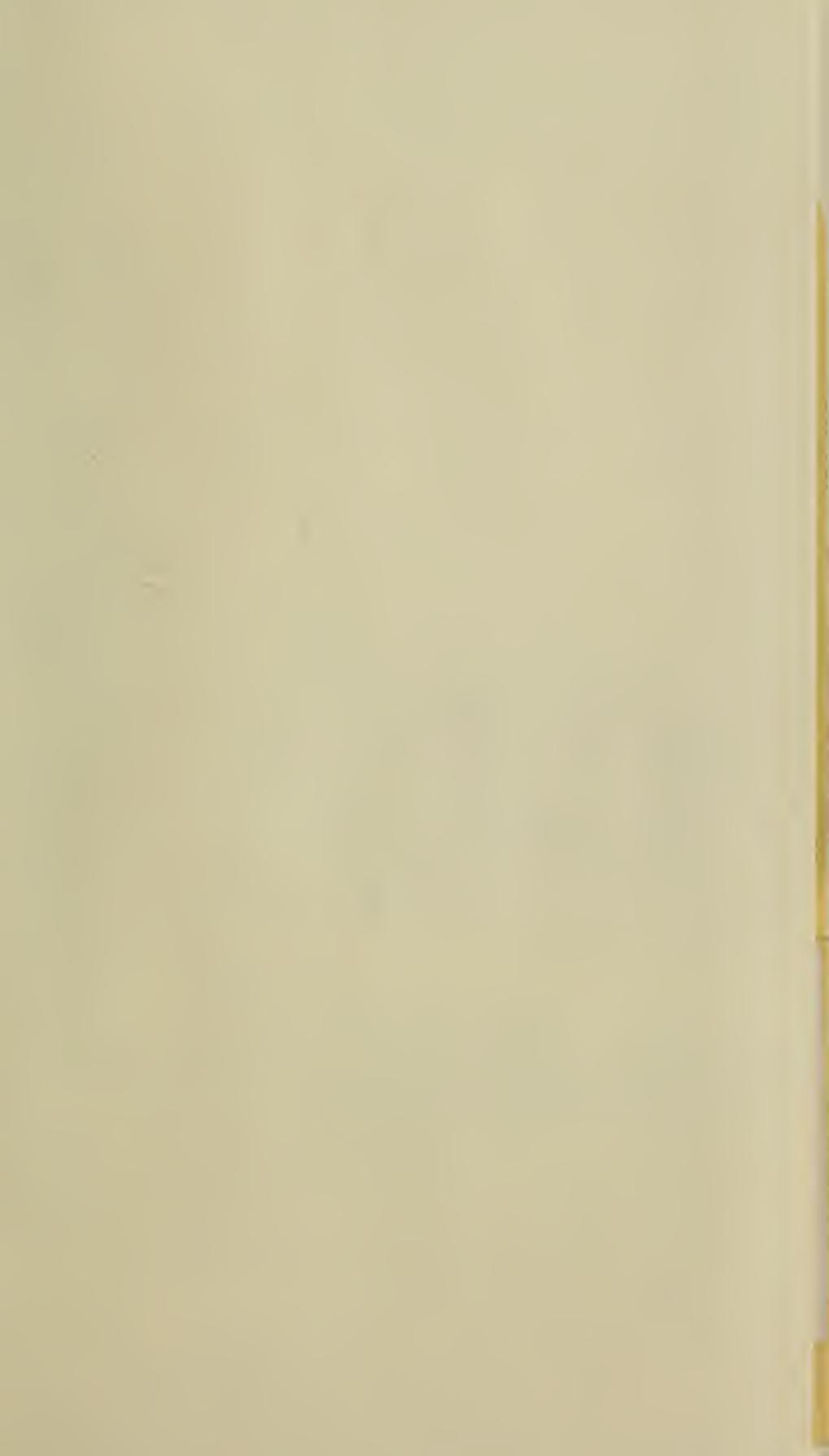
**Malo-Jaroslavitz, to face page 210**

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